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A Matter of Attachment: Death Runners and their Racing Environments

by

Hui-Shin, Ngiam



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Recreation and Leisure Studies

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **A MATTER OF ATTACHMENT: DEATH RACERS AND THEIR RACING ENVIRONMENTS** submitted by Hui-Shin Ngiam in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Recreation and Leisure Studies.

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Abstract

Place attachment is the positive affective bond between an individual and a place where he or she visits (Hay, 1999; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983). This exploratory study, based on the tenets of phenomenology, considers whether participation in a mid-length adventure race fosters place attachment for the racers to their racing environments. Based on in-depth interviews with 11 participants of the 2002 Canadian Death Run, in Grande Cache, Alberta, insights to the research question are provided in terms of the respondents' self-perceptions, their experiences during the race and their attachment to the race environments.

Respondents saw themselves as trail runners and seekers of personal challenges, thereby suggesting their affinity for particular places. In 're-living' their Death Run experience, the respondents noted common sensations such as happiness, peace, sadness, pain and frustration. Finally, the respondents' attachment to the race area was expressed in several ways. However, their attachment to place was more a function of place dependence than place identity.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, who has supported me in every way, shape, and form over the last two years. Dad, Mum, Ping-Shin, Shin-Shin, Hui Yang and Yee Shian, thank you for all your constant encouragement in my pursuit for the 'little things' in life. Without your help, support and love, my world would have been a different place and the completion of this thesis, near impossible.

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一方水土, 一方人

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Chapter I

Introduction

The Eco-Challenge is based on the philosophy that interaction with the environment requires both a knowledge of and respect for the terrain through which the race travels. Each event is designed to have minimum impact on the land and encourages a "leave no trace" philosophy. (Eco-Challenge, 2003, <http://www.ecochallenge.com/race.html>)

1.1 Introduction

Over the last decade, the number of adventure races in North America has increased dramatically. In Canada alone, the number of such events has increased by six times within a period of two years (Frontier Adventure Racing, 2001). This dramatic increase in the popularity of and demand for such multi-sport, wilderness endurance races has, in part, been attributed to the increased stress in urban living and the gradual alienation of humans from the natural environment (Akhurst, 1995; Poulin, Swartz & Flaxel, 2002; Greenway, 1995; Stankey, 1989). Further, it has been suggested that participation in such races is a way for people to escape the city for a 'leisure' experience and also to re-connect with nature (Potter & Gray, 1999; Poulin et al.).

Along with the growing popularity of adventure races, there has also been a strong rise in the demand for 'experienced-oriented' leisure activities, as manifested in adventure travel (Sung, Morrison & O'Leary, 1997). Characterized by the participation in an activity or an experience outside of one's home region, adventure travel activities are usually conducted in natural environments. Often, these activities also have an element of perceived risk and unpredictability (Ewert & Shultis, 1997). In this light, activities such as kayaking, climbing, and even adventure racing can be considered to be adventure travel activities which individuals experience outside of their home regions.

1.2 Adventure Races and Participants.

Adventure racing can be described as a multi-sport/ultra-endurance race that usually involves navigating, sea kayaking, mountaineering, mountain biking, trekking and, on some occasions, other novelty activities such as horseback riding and scuba diving (Eco-Challenge, 2003; Eshane Web Design, 2001). Adventure racing requires participants (in teams of 3 or 4 members) to get from checkpoint to checkpoint via different modes of self-propelled transportation with little or no outside assistance. Usually held in remote wilderness locations, adventure races typically involve distances ranging from 40 to 700 kilometres (km). As a result of restrictions placed on competitors regarding outside help, even participants covering distances of more than 500 km sometimes have to carry all their equipment, food and gear needed throughout the race (Frontier Adventure Racing, 2002). The goal of travelling from the starting point to the finish line in the shortest possible time sometimes also results in competitors' having little time to sleep.

Typically, there are two types of adventure races. The classic 'expedition' adventure races (CARs), often lasting more than three days, and the mid-length adventure races (MLARs), which are usually shortened versions of the standard expedition style races. With race distances of 500 km or more, CARs are generally considered to be more prestigious, usually attracting teams from many parts of the world. However, given the high time¹ and monetary requirements to compete in these races, access is often limited to a relatively small group of people. In a move to allow more people to enjoy the sport of adventure racing, MLARs have emerged as a recent trend. These races resemble a

¹ Races taking more than five days usually require not only a major time commitment for preparation and competing but also a large financial commitment (Caged Tigers Adventure Racing Team, 2003). Entry fees can range from as low as US\$100/participant to US\$2,500/participant.

'standard' adventure race except for the shorter time frame in which the event takes place (Michigan Sports and Fitness, 2002).

Typically lasting from 5 to 48 hours, MLARs include high profile events such as the REI Adventure Classic (International Adventure Events, 2003), Subaru Adventure Racing Series (Adventure Racing Canada, 2003) and Raid the North (Frontier Adventure Racing Inc, 2002). These races are mainly staged for 'weekend warriors,' giving individuals who can only spare a day or two an opportunity to race. Similar to CARs, MLARs are also staged in relatively isolated and pristine natural areas. Recently, MLARs have also taken a new form. Now, there are some single discipline races (i.e., running cycling, cross-country skiing, etc.) involving distances, environments, and durations similar to MLARs occurring all over the world.

Races such as the 100-mile Yukon Arctic Ultra (Eventrate, 2003) and the Marathon Des Sables (Racing the Planet Inc, 2003) are examples of single discipline events that are sometimes more physically challenging than the standard MLARs. These new-types of MLARs are held in a variety of natural environments including boreal forests, the arctic tundra and deserts. Spanning distances of 80 to 160 km, these races typically require as much physical and mental stamina, if not more, from their participants as CARs. Like participants in CARs, MLARs feature both team and solo participants who also have to carry their equipment, withstand weather extremes, and endure physical hardships in order to complete the race. In this sense, single discipline MLARs, such as those mentioned above, are also likely to create some environmental damage at the race sites (Michigan Sports and Fitness, 2002) such as the trampling of vegetation and the disturbance of animal habitats (Hendee, Stankey & Lucas, 1990).

As more races of this nature are being staged in North America, access to and publicity about less popular trails and previously 'untouched' natural areas are also increasing. In light of this, race sites in lesser-known areas in state parks, nature reserves and national parks may also become more vulnerable to overuse or misuse.

1.3. Adventure racers and the Natural Environment

Research has suggested that people engaged in non-motorized activities tend to feel more connected to the natural worlds they recreate in (Dunlap & Heffernan, 1975). It seems logical to speculate that the same can be expected of participants in adventure races. Do individuals who spend a significant amount of time training and competing in natural areas feel connected to the spaces that they train and race in? That is, do these individuals form strong bonds with that environment? Furthermore, is it possible that this 'connection' to the land can also become an impetus for them to return to the place or to protect it from threats to its integrity?

Given the nature of adventure races and the amount of interaction participants have with natural surroundings during a race, it has been suggested that participants gain respect for the areas in which they compete (Dunlap & Heffernan, 1975; Poulin et al., 2002). While this idea has yet to be tested, the answers to the above questions are important for a number of reasons.

The 'place attachment' that occurs between individuals and physical spaces that they visit may be associated with a range of behaviours. If 'place' is defined as a space that has been endowed with human values (Tuan, 1976), one manifestation of place attachment could be the ethic of care being communicated by individuals in regard to the

places to which they feel attached (Tuan, 1977). Similar to the way many may feel about their childhood homes, natural areas that people have grown to appreciate and enjoy being in are also likely to evoke similar feelings of sadness or nostalgia as the place changes. It is this relationship that makes 'place attachment' important for wildland resource management.

Giving members of the public (other than local residents) a voice in the process of wildland resource planning may help resource managers to prevent future user conflicts (Sharpe & Ewert, 2000; Warzecha & Lime, 2001; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck & Watson, 1992). In acknowledging the potential of users of a particular natural area to develop an attachment to it, resource managers are recognising the importance of such bonds between an individual and a place. Individuals that are attached to place should be considered stakeholders who can provide useful information to resource planners. They provide resource planners with a better understanding of the issues upon which visitors and locals may differ. Furthermore, if land managers know that adventure racers develop a sense of place attachment with the natural areas in which they compete, then they might worry less about potential acts of littering and the destruction of flora and fauna. Land managers could also anticipate the involvement of these competitors when natural areas are threatened by the development.

Similar to taking pride in one's living spaces and making them clean and comfortable, individuals who are attached to a particular place may also derive a sense of pride and joy from ensuring that it is well cared for. Thus, with the growing number of adventure races taking place in pristine wilderness areas, and with many of these races becoming annual events, the question of whether place attachment develops among

participants of MLARs to their racing environments has to be asked. Do the experiences of participants in MLARs go beyond the physical and mental challenges posed by the race site to the extent of developing a bond with and caring for the areas in which they have raced? How does the intensity and intimacy of their interaction affect their attachment? Alternatively, do racers travel in these natural areas without developing any attachment to these areas? Finally, what particular experiences may trigger the development of place attachment, if it does exist? In an attempt to synthesize the various questions pertaining to this topic, the following overarching research question guides this study: Does participation in a mid-length adventure race foster place attachment of racers to their racing environment?

1.4. Factors Affecting Place Attachment amongst Participants of MLARs

The proposition that participants in MLARs form a strong sense of attachment to their racing environments may seem unlikely because of their focus on seeking challenges, fighting fatigue and 'conquering' mother nature (Doane, 2002; Le Breton, 2000). There are, nevertheless, several reasons to believe that formation of place attachment is possible. For example, it has been argued that place attachment occurs when one has achieved domination over his/her environments or physical space (Ittleson, Franck & O'Hanlon, 1976; Russell & Mehrabian, 1976). In the context of adventure racing, the notion of domination over a space could mean the successful completion of an adventure race, that one has overcame the 'wrath' of Mother Nature² and emerged a 'survivor'. This proposition is consistent with Marcus' (1992) suggestion that the most

² Adventure racing is known for its extremes. Due to the extreme differences in racing environments at different stages, participants are usually advised to have gear for a variety of scenarios. In Eco-Challenge 2001, competitors had to hike glaciers, kayak in the sea, and bike through a snowstorm (Doane, 2002).

powerful memories of a place for individuals are usually those associated with spaces where a significant event has occurred. These events could, for example, include the place where they fell in love, where they established themselves in a particular career, or where they built their first tree house. Such places become important to people because of the sense of control individuals feel over their surroundings. This sense of control may give rise to a positive sense of self-identity, which could, in turn, be a contributing factor to place attachment.

Applied to the context of individuals' participating in an adventure race, the experience of positive self-identity may occur at various moments throughout the race. The first successful completion of an adventure race, the recollection of good times in environments similar to those of the race or the novel encounter with local wildlife (i.e., bear, caribou, elephants, etc.) all serve as examples of how this sense of positive self-identity is achieved during an adventure race. Sometimes, the way an individual achieves positive self-identity, within the wilderness, may also be through another form of domination referred to as 'self-control'—the successful exertion of control over oneself (Scherl, 1989).

Scherl (1989) defines 'self-control' as "the process by which attention is shifted to oneself, either inwardly or to oneself as a component of an environmental transaction." (p.127). This form of domination often occurs when individuals are engaged in situations in which they have little or no scope for external control. In this sense, Scherl proposes that human beings, when put into wilderness situations, tend to 'relinquish' the notion of domination over the environment and focus that sense of control over oneself. Applied to adventure racers, their experience of positive self-identity may emerge during the race in

different ways. For example, the ability to control one's fear of the 'unknown' in wilderness settings and to focus on the completion of the task at hand may promote a positive self-identity. The ability to complete the race, despite being injured, serves as another example of a situation in which positive self-identity can be achieved. Based on the above discussion, it can be seen that the two different means of achieving positive self-identity (primary and secondary control) could serve as crucial factors in the development of place attachment for MLARS participants. Thus, the development of a sub-question for the study emerges: Does sense of control affect the place attachment of a mid-length adventure race participant?

1.5 General Approach

A qualitative approach was used in this study, given that the meanings associated with particular spaces—and thus places—are very subjective and personal. The rich descriptions of the race experience obtained from a group seldom investigated—adventure racers—provides important insights into the complexity of people's assignment of meanings to particular spaces, under competitive situations. Such an approach extends the measured values featured in quantitative research (Fishwick & Vining, 1992; Moore & Grafe, 1994; Seamon, 1982). Researchers engaged in the quantitative aspect of human-environment studies have suggested that a qualitative approach adds to the depth of understanding and provides complementary insights to earlier quantitative findings (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000). A phenomenological approach was, therefore, adopted to capture the descriptions of the race experience as 'lived' by the participants. Using the long interview method as the main mode of information gathering,

this study was guided by the tenets of McCracken's (1988) four-step process. Divided in four parts, the progression of the four stages can be seen in Chapter II (Stages 1 & 2), Chapter III (Stages 3 & 4) and the latter part of Stage 4 in the subsequent Chapters IV, V and VI. This four-step process is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Long Qualitative Interview: Four-Part Method of Inquiry.³

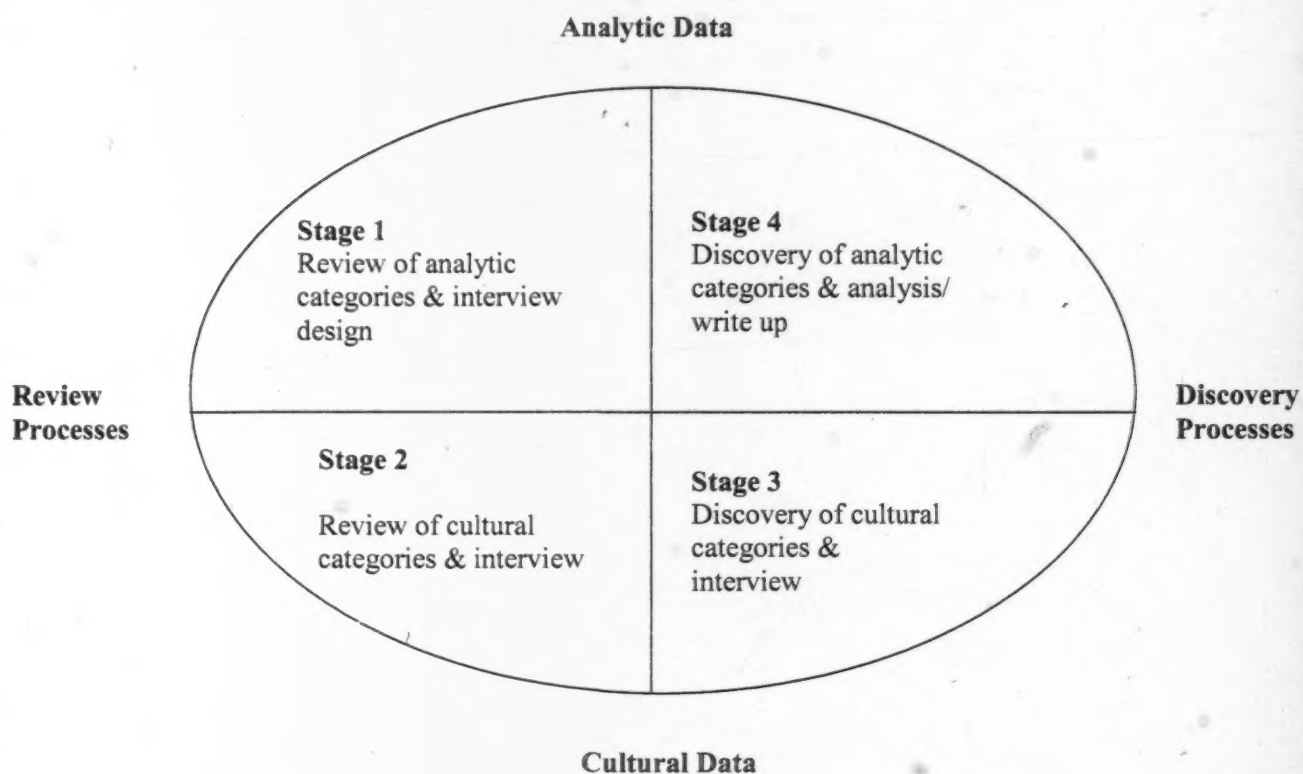


Figure 1. McCracken (1988) four-part method of inquiry.

³ From "The long interview: Qualitative research methods series 13," by G. McCracken, 1988. p.30

1.6 A Brief Note about the Researcher

As with most qualitative methodologies, it is important for researchers to state their potential biases, pre-conceptions and experiences so as to be able to 'distance' themselves from the eventual data obtained later (Moustakas, 1994). In this case, the 'distancing' is not only a suggested step in Stage 2 of Figure 1, but it also helped me in the analysis of the data obtained. The acknowledgement and recognition of my own thoughts and biases have helped me to keep an open mind when listening to the experiences of other people. Thus, as an element of the research process, a brief summary of my view is presented below. This summary provides a glimpse into why I chose to embark on this study and it provides an important context for my interpretation of the study findings.

1.6.1 The natural environment from my lenses.

Life is an adventure. As one learns to move with the ebb and flow of life, it is hoped that he or she is also thoughtful to others who may be affected by his or her actions. For every cause, there is an effect, and for every door that is opened, one more is closed. In today's world of interconnectedness, I have come to realize my appreciation for the environment and its importance to me as a human being as well as to all other species. The high value that I place on the natural environment is the central reason that I have chosen to study the human-environment relationship.

Ever since I can recall, I have been captivated by photos of snow-capped mountains, clusters of pine trees, open vistas, rushing waters, exotic wildlife, and rainforest canopies. These days, I am still moved by these photos and pictures illustrating

landscapes that also depict the serenity, might and magnitude of nature. However, coming from the landlocked country of Singapore, I have developed an appreciation for whatever natural landscapes that remains within the area. I have taken it upon myself to advocate and participate in the preservation of these areas. Having developed this nature-loving attitude while spending time in the outdoors (e.g., hiking, walking and running), I have often viewed adventure racing or ultra endurance races as ways of introducing humans to the beauty and wonders of nature. I also believe that these races can potentially plant a seed in participants that may eventually lead to environmental protection and advocacy.

As a fan of events such as Eco-Challenge and Raid Galouise since their inception, I have also perceived such competitions as a kind of nature-based tourism package that not only provides access to some of the more remote natural areas of the world, but also the opportunity to be physically active. This was the way I felt while doing my first 36-hour adventure race in Singapore.

During that race, I remember being awed (if not overwhelmed) by the beauty of the various areas and islands that I had run through—despite having only slept for 5 minutes in a 30-hour period. After the competition, I found myself carrying those memories of the race with me, along with others of particular hardships and challenges that my teammates and I faced during the competition. Despite having our sights focused on finishing the race and not having completed it, there were particular spaces that we travelled through that have stayed clearly in my mind. The significance they hold for me is enduring. Having an opportunity that afforded me a unique perspective of my country, I emerged from the race being more aware of what lay beyond the urban environment I

had always known and of the resource issues surrounding many of these non-urban areas. After the race, I was also sure of my willingness to stand up against potential development that could destroy or take away these natural areas from me, simply because I had seen, experienced and interacted with the place during the race.

Given my own experience, I have often wondered whether other adventure racers share a similar perspective based on their involvement in these races. Do they personalize the environment in which they function? Do they develop some sense of wanting to return or protect the area should the 'axe' of civilization threaten it? While I feel this way, some of my friends have reflected otherwise—claiming nature to be a functional place—the ultimate challenge left for humans is to explore and conquer. It was these thoughts that stirred me to do this study.

While understanding that there are also several cultural inhibitions as well as personality differences in the 'attainment' (if we can call it that) of such feelings for natural areas, I have chosen to ground my research in a phenomenological perspective. As a perspective that encourages discovery through the objects themselves, the phenomenological perspective allows me to listen to the stories and experiences of others who have participated in adventure races through wilderness areas. A quantitative survey approach would have limited the nature and depth of information that I could gather. Furthermore, I have always been personally fascinated by stories and documentaries about humans within natural environments. The phenomenological perspective, therefore, is an appropriate guide for gaining insight into issues that vary from culture to culture, and person to person. The multiple meanings and the potential to understand them in

detailed ways would have been difficult, if not impossible, using standard quantitative survey techniques.

1.7 Chapter Summary

In summary, with the growing trend for MLARs in pristine natural environments, it is useful to know whether participants in these events develop a sense of place attachment to the areas in which they race. The behaviours that are likely to grow from such an attachment may help to protect the natural environment from harm and allow nature to thrive. With specific attention paid to factors such as the experience of control and positive self-identity during a race, a qualitative study of participant place attachment provides further insight into the nature of this attachment. A review of the literature follows Chapter I, highlighting the concepts and rationale for the study, and positioning it within the current body of knowledge associated with this subject.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The comforting familiarity of home, the nostalgic musings of a vacation past, the serenity of a mountain meadow, the refreshing aroma of a pine forest—all exemplify our connectedness to the world around us. Whether engaged in work or play, our surroundings provide the context for all events and activities that occur in our lives. (Warzecha & Lime, 2001, p. 60)

2.1 Introduction

A literature review is intended to position the research question in the context of the existing body of knowledge on the topic, to curb research bias, and to demonstrate the researcher's understanding of the topic of interest (McCracken, 1988). This chapter reviews both past and current literature related to the following:

- Outdoor recreation, to establish the environmental impact of adventure racing.
- Adventure-sports tourism, to understand the possible motivations that drive adventure racers in their outdoors leisure pursuits.
- The outdoor recreation experience, to demonstrate the complex relationships and factors that form the overall experience.
- The sense of place and place attachment, to understand the various dimensions that underlie these concepts.
- The sense of control, to consider how it may contribute to place attachment.

2.2 Activities and the Environment

Many activities happen in the context of a particular environment. Regardless of the activities we are engaged in (i.e., work or play), the surroundings will always provide a context for the events and occurrences in our lives (Warzecha & Lime, 2001). The following section will focus on adventure racing, outdoor recreation and the possible

impacts on the natural environment. In addition, a brief discussion of how adventure racers fit the typology of both adventure and sports tourists is included.

2.2.1 Adventure racing and the natural environment.

Adventure races can have a negative impact on the natural environments where the races are held (Michigan Sports and Fitness, 2001). With participants travelling through natural areas that see little human activity (Eco-Challenge, 2003), the stresses created by such races can potentially cause substantial environmental impacts (Cole, 1992). The chances of inflicting environmental damage are likely to increase proportionately with the duration and scale of the race. That is, as the length of the race increases, participants will also be more likely to have to spend more time in the natural areas, not only travelling through them but also resting in them. This means that campsites may have to be set up for competitors to rest along the race routes or to take shelter from extreme weather conditions. Coupled with the growing demand for such races, the natural environment will be increasingly threatened in the coming years; not only through the trampling of vegetation and the loss of topsoil but also the pollution caused by human waste and garbage (Hendee et al., 1990). The potential for environmental impact upon natural areas by such races must be taken into consideration. However, due to the lack of studies done to date on this topic, much will have to be inferred from the available literature relating outdoor recreation to environmental damage.

2.2.2 Outdoor recreation and the natural environment.

Over the last two decades, there seems to have been an acknowledgement of the potential harm outdoor recreational activities such as fishing, camping, trail biking and skiing can bring to natural areas (Cole, 1992; Hendee et al., 1990). Damage such as vegetation loss, severely compacted soils, soil erosions and damaged trees are a few examples among the many that have been noted. As a result of such damage, wildlife habitat can be altered, wildlife migration patterns can be changed and depletion and imbalances in the local food chain may occur. In fact, all forms of outdoor recreational activity, no matter how 'environmentally friendly' will likely inflict some form of environmental damage. However, the extent of the damage is dependent, in part, on the group of people engaged in the activity (Cole). Participants who are well versed in 'leave-no-trace' techniques are more likely to cause less disturbances. In addition, it has also been suggested that the appreciation of one's natural surroundings and possible connections with the natural environment may be attributed to the kinds of outdoor recreational activities in which individuals engage (Dunlap & Heffernan, 1975).

As previous studies have suggested, outdoor recreationists are better able to appreciate the natural environment because of their exposure to environmental issues (Gale, 1972). However, other studies have found this claim to be applicable to only selected activities. In a study investigating environmental concern amongst outdoor recreationists, Dunlap and Heffernan (1975) found that environmental concern was more likely to be manifested by individuals who engaged in 'appreciative' type activities such as hiking and sea-kayaking, in contrast to activities such as fishing and hunting which they defined as 'consumptive.' Recent studies investigating the topic have also shown

that those engaged in non-mechanized and/or non-motorized activities also tend to exhibit more environmental concern (Jackson, 1986; 1987; Tarrant & Green, 1999). Taking the above into account, would it then be accurate to infer that adventure racers are likely to be more appreciative of the natural environment that they train and race in? Would individuals feel more connected towards their racing and training surroundings simply because most of the race disciplines⁴ involve activities of an appreciative nature?

Often noted to be no more than thrill seekers looking for the ultimate challenge (Eco-Challenge, 2003; Le Breton, 2000, Poulin et al., 2002), many participants in adventure races are considered to be novice athletes seeking a challenge beyond urban limits. From this perspective, it is doubtful that many of them are in such competitions to connect to their natural surroundings because, ultimately, their focus is very much on completing a race and fighting fatigue (Doane, 2002). Pushed to their human limits, is it possible that their attention can be directed towards enjoying their natural surroundings when they are focused on figuring out course routes, fighting fatigue, managing team dynamics (if it is a team event) and planning for the next part of the course? These questions suggest that the proposition of adventure racers being connected to the areas they race and train in may not be supported. Because adventure racers often participate in races to feel good about themselves, to satisfy their egos and to prove their ability to conquer nature, adventure racers may see increasing conflict amongst themselves and other users as the numbers of adventure races occur.

As the number of participants in such races increase, conflicts such as those between mechanized and non-mechanized users of trails may surface (Jackson & Wong, 1982). While the conflicts may not be of the same nature, how can participants (in

⁴ Even MLAR with a single discipline are usually non-motorized

training and racing) show that their engagement in a race has given them a better sense of their natural environment and a certain connectedness to the natural surroundings? As seen in the literature so far, there has been no study—to the best of the author's knowledge—of such a study done on the population of adventure racers. Whether it is regarding their motivations for participating in such races, or how they relate to their racing environments, studies done on this population have been scarce. As the conservation movement strengthens, and the mandates in National Parks moving towards a more eco-centric paradigm, it seems more crucial that adventure racers be asked the benefits they gain from competing in the natural environments. Why should natural areas not be preserved and used by those who may be able to take in the environment more fully and acquire a deeper appreciation for it? On a similar note, why should pristine natural areas be used as mere 'playgrounds' for some individuals to challenge nature and potentially cause environmental damage to it? Given these issues, the main question in this research study seeks to investigate if participants in a mid-length adventure race (MLAR) are able to foster an attachment to their racing environments, as a result of participating in the race? In addition, an understanding of the variety of motivations, needs and goals of adventure racers may also provide insights into the way adventure racers relate to the spaces that they race in.

2.2.3 Adventure racers: Adventure and sports tourists?

Often having to travel distances of more than 80 km away from their home region to compete in races, many race participants can be considered 'tourists' in search not only of adventure but also new places (Statistics Canada, 1997). Activities engaged in during

an adventure race are often considered to be risky and relatively unpredictable. This element of risk also characterizes those activities undertaken during what is typically termed adventure travel. Participants in MLARs can, therefore, be deemed as adventure travellers, by virtue of the activities that are engaged in during an adventure race. Despite this similarity, the term 'adventure tourist' fails to fully acknowledge the competitive aspect that underlies these events. In this sense, the concept of adventure tourism is insufficient as a descriptor of participants in these races. Participants in MLARs can realistically be known more accurately as adventure-sport tourists when the elements of travel, risk-taking, unpredictability, competition and experience are taken into account.

2.2.3.1 Adventure tourism.

Adventure tourism is defined as "a trip or travel with the specific purpose of activity participants to explore a new experience, often involving perceived risk or controlled danger associated with personal challenges, in a natural environment or exotic outdoor setting" (Sung et al., 1997, p.66). As such, it is an appropriate term to describe activities like CARs and MLARs. Having travelled a significant distance away from home to participate in these races, many participants of CAR and MLAR immerse themselves in new environments and face a broad range of known and unknown challenges. The element of the 'unknown', along with that of risk (Ewert & Shultis, 1997) and personal competence (Morgan, Moore & Mansell, 1997), are other characterizations typical of the adventure tourism experience (Priest & Baillie, 1987). Participants in adventure tourism activities are often described as people seeking safe 'risks' (Hall & McArthur, 1991), new experiences and the "exhilaration of facing or

overcoming challenges" (Priest & Ballie, p.16). This description is also a befitting one for participants in adventure races.

Having to expose themselves to a significant level of risk and to rely on their personal competence to successfully complete a race, participants in adventure races are also driven by a desire to compete. This competition can be against the other participants, the environment, or themselves (Doane, 2002). Taking competition into account, it is then evident that there is a gap in the definition of adventure tourism and the subsequent 'labelling' of adventure racers as adventure tourists. This gap, however, can be bridged by the concept of sport tourism (Hall, 1992).

2.2.3.2 Sports tourism.

Although sometimes used interchangeably with adventure tourism, sports tourism is fundamentally different. It is defined as "sports-based travel away from the home environment for a limited time, where sport is characterized by unique rule sets, competition related to physical prowess, and a playful nature" (Hinch & Higham, 2001, p.49). Sport tourism places an emphasis on the nature of the activity as being structured by rules—of both a formal or informal nature—thus setting its activities apart from those related to adventure tourism. The degree of competition can also vary in terms of its nature and intensity. Finally, play is a fundamental element of sport tourism and it, too, covers a range from the frivolous to the serious.

Typically, the motivations of sports tourists are also a little different from those of adventure tourists. Instead of deliberately seeking risk, many sports tourists are also motivated by an intention to compete (Hall, 1992), to acquire and maintain individual

skills, and to gain knowledge that may enable them to experience uncommon rewards through their activity. Often characterized by their strict adherence to the rules of the competition (Frontier Adventure Racing, 2002; Eco-Challenge Lifestyles, 2002), adventure racers also have to engage in some degree of playfulness to maintain relationships amongst their team members in times of extreme stress. Furthermore, they also have to exert their physical prowess both mentally and physically to overcome the obstacles presented during the race. In this sense, adventure racers can be considered as sports tourists. Thus, an adequate description of these individuals would be that of adventure-sports tourists.

2.3 Experience

Given the variety of needs, goals and motivations of the adventure racer, it is useful to gain an understanding of the outdoor recreation experience and the ways it can be interpreted. Often, it is the experience of the event that provides the most insight into how a connection to the natural environment—if there is one—forms and develops over the course of a race. This section will focus on the outdoor recreation experience from a multi-phasic approach, as proposed by Clawson and Knetsch (1966).

2.3.1 The outdoor recreation experience.

Approached from a multi-phased perspective, the outdoor recreation experience can be split into five distinct phases: anticipation, travel-to, on-site experience, travel-back and recollection (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). All these five phases may potentially play a large part in determining whether or not, the outdoor recreational experience has

been positive or negative. In the anticipation phase, the plans and decisions are made and expectations built. According to Clawson and Knetsch, the time span for the anticipation phase may cover an extended period of time before the actual engagement in the activity. However, it is also important to recognise that the higher the expectations that one has in this phase, the more one is likely to jeopardise the entire experience should their anticipation outrun reality. In the adventure racing context, this phase may cover the training, visualizing and preparing for the race. The expectations of achieving either a personal best performance or a particular ranking are also likely to form at this stage. While the anticipation phase can stretch over a period of time, the travel-to phase is usually briefer.

The travel-to phase, which is characterized by the time one leaves their home base to the time they arrive at the site of the recreational activity, is usually shorter than the previous phase. Depending on what happens on the way to the site of the activity, the mood, emotions and social company during this time may contribute to the way the actual experience of engaging in the activity is viewed later. While few studies have been done on the first two phases, a number of studies have focused upon on-site experiences (e.g., Walker, Hull & Roggenbuck, 1998).

The on-site phase of the outdoor recreation experience has been the traditional focus of most leisure resource managers looking to enhance the experience of outdoor recreational users (McIntyre & Roggenbuck, 1998). Clawson and Knetsch (1966) caution that this phase may or may not be pivotal to the entire experience. Depending on the motivation and actual focus of the trip, the on-site encounters of an individual may play a major or minor role in the entire experience. Applied to the adventure racing context, the

actual on-site experience is likely to contribute substantially to the entire experience because of the participant's focus on the activity. In this sense, it follows that the encountering of animals, extreme weather conditions, and interaction with the natural environment may potentially be pivotal to this phase of the experience.

The travel-back experience can be substantially different from the travel-to phase, even if the same route is taken, because the general mood, feelings and atmosphere may differ (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). This phase might involve a more relaxed/relieved atmosphere for most adventure racers due to closing of the event⁵. It may also serve as a time for rest or contemplation of the race experience. While this time may offer a chance to evaluate one's performance, the fifth phase is more likely to serve this role.

The final phase in the total outdoor recreation experience, the recollection phase, is usually the evaluative part of the experience, when one recalls the recreational experience again (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). This phase allows participants to assess the benefits that they may have gained from the activity, leading to the anticipation of the next outing. Clearly, there are many variables that can contribute to the total outdoor recreational experience. While they are not a main focus of the research, acknowledging the existence of this experience model allows a possible framework for data analysis.

2.4 Place

A physical space, once endowed with human values can be known as 'place' (Tuan, 1977). Sometimes, the values associated with a physical space are derived as a result of having lived in the space or interacted with it. Moreover, place can also take on many meanings and spatial dimensions (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Steele, 1981). In the

⁵ The closure of the event may mean completion or non-completion by the adventure racer.

outdoor context, some examples of 'place' may range from environments with particular settings to a specific place itself. For example, an individual may regard any natural environment that has pine and spruce trees to be a 'place' while another may regard the Berg Lake area along the North Boundary Trail in Mt Robson Provincial Park to be considered a place. With the vast amounts of meanings that can be assigned to any one geographic space, it can be concluded that a 'place' is ultimately determined by the perceptions of each and every individual. Thus, a place cannot exist independent of any individual (Tuan, 1977). As a result of the subjective nature of 'place,' it is only natural that any possible connection to place, by an individual, will also vary on a continuum. This section will focus on those connections: first with the spaces that humans inhabit in, and secondly, with the spaces that humans visit and travel through.

2.4.1 Sense of place.

Used to describe the connection between a human being and a physical space, sense of place is also known as 'spirit of place'—which sometimes also describes the way humans experience a place (Steele, 1981; Tuan, 1977). Sense of place has also been thought to be a result of humans reacting to the physical space that they are in (Ittleson et al., 1976; Russell & Mehrabian, 1976). This connection, according to Potter and Gray (1999), provides the ability for humans to look beyond the functional aspects of a space as a means of fulfilling their needs and wants, and instead bonding with it and making it a part of their lives. In the literature on sense of place, this feeling is often associated with the connection between human beings and their lived spaces, where an individual has

either spent an extended period of time or where an individual is rooted⁶ (Hay, 1998; Steele, 1981).

Sense of place is a mechanism that humans use to differentiate one place from another, depending on what meanings and values a particular space may hold for them. This means that two individuals are likely to relate to a similar space in different ways, depending on the experiences that the individual has associated with each particular space. Consequently, there is a strong suggestion that 'sense of place' is a connection that results from having spent time in a particular place. While, there may be a few studies suggesting otherwise, there are arguments that support the notion that a similar kind of bonding can be found between mobile populations and the places that they travel through (Cuthbertson, Heine & Whitson, 1997; Mesch & Manor, 1998). This bonding can be termed as place attachment (Hay, 1998).

2.4.2 Place attachment.

Defined as a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983), place attachment has been suggested to be a suitable concept to study transient populations and their 'connection' to physical spaces (Hay, 1998). This is because unlike sense of place, place attachment recognises that 'positive bonds' can also be formed through a single encounter with a physical space.

Transient individuals, who have developed friendships while visiting Edmonton may tend to consider the city as a place where they have had a good time, felt relaxed and formed significant friendships. This, in turn, may enable some of them to connect with

⁶ 'Rooted' in this context means the spaces where one has been born, raised, socialised, schooled and grown up in.

Edmonton in a positive way, giving them a desire to return. Conversely, if they were victimized in some way during their short stay in Edmonton, they would be less likely to have a desire to return to the city because of the fear and insecurity associated with their previous experience. In the wilderness context, the concept of attachment between individuals and their preferred location for outdoor recreation (in natural settings) has been explored in a similar fashion (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000).

Place attachment in the wilderness context can be seen in the frequent visits by individuals to a particular trail because of their positive connection to it. Although there are many explanations as to how the attachment between individuals and the trail forms, some important ones are that the trail reminds them of a similar place where they had spent a lot of time during their childhood (Marcus, 1992), the trail stands out for them as the first encounter with the backcountry (Ittleson et al., 1976; Russell & Mehabian, 1976; Scherl, 1989), the trail satisfies their immediate needs for solitude and scenery (Francis, 1989; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983), or the trail acts as a gathering spot for their group of friends and therefore presents an opportunity to renew old friendships (Williams et al., 1992). Beyond 'historical' and social reasons, other factors such as the activities available at the place or even the settings of the place itself can also account for these feelings that tie an individual to a particular place (Williams et al.,). This 'tie' to a place may subsequently create a desire in the individual to return to the same spot over and over again to enjoy the settings, to engage in a similar activity, or to re-live past events that have taken place in that particular space. Noting that there is seldom one sole reason as to why an individual becomes attached to a particular space, it would be reasonable to assume that place attachment can lead to a variety of outcomes, two of which could be

the attainment of geopiety (Tuan, 1976) or a commitment to local organizations (Fried, 2000; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983).

Geopiety is defined as an individuals' attachment to their families and reverence for their homeland (Tuan, 1976), and also seen as requirement for the sense of respect, gratitude and care directed towards a particular place that one forms an attachment to (Moore & Grafe, 1994). It then follows that as a result of geopiety, individuals will tend to treat the areas of attachment like they would their home. For example, they may take care not to litter, destroy vegetation or disturb wildlife while they are in the vicinity of that particular place. Applied to the outdoor context, geopiety can also be seen as the "fostering of an environmental preservation ethic" (Sharpe & Ewert, 2001, p. 220), as visitors try to maintain the status quo of a specific natural place, to which they have formed an attachment. In the extreme, individuals having a strong attachment to a particular natural area may also be more willing to make personal sacrifices that could increase environmental protection of the areas they are attached to (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995; Chawla, 1992). As a result of such attachment, loss⁷ at that place is also sometimes hard to bear. Similar to the idea of individuals' losing their homes due to civil unrest, war or natural catastrophe, the threat or actual disruption to the status quo of other important places may cause grief, anger and fear for those attached to it (Fried, 2000; Schroeder, 1996). In addition to taking care of a place while one is within the vicinity, sometimes this attachment to a natural area may extend beyond the self. For example, individuals start contributing personally to local organisations and their causes (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983).

⁷ Loss can come in a variety of ways such as the partial or full destruction of areas of pristine wilderness, or further development/construction within the natural environment. The disappearance of that 'old feeling' can also be considered to be one aspect of loss.

Personal contributions to the causes of organizations and groups within the local community of a place can be manifested in many ways. For example, the attachment of individuals to natural areas may lead them to become involved with local organisations (e.g., local 4-H club or Rotary Club) or other organisations (e.g., Friends of Jasper or the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Association etc.) that work towards the preservation of the area. Sometimes this involvement may also take the form of action, such as letter writing, signing, petitions or even active protests in support of the protection of the natural area. Sharing environmentally friendly tips regarding the area or taking part in a community cleanup are also ways of being active (Vaske & Kobrin, 2001). This type of involvement, according to Relph (as cited in Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000), has also helped people acquire a sense of belonging and purpose, thereby giving meaning to their lives.

With places having the ability to bring such value to the lives of individuals and/or groups of people, it may be helpful to understand how long such attachments to a place may endure. Are spaces replaceable by other spaces with the same settings? Is place attachment likely to increase or fade with time? A further examination into place identity and place dependence, the two dimensions that make up place attachment, may help shed some light on the above questions (Ewert & Sharpe, 2001; Moore & Grafe, 1994; Williams et al., 1992).

2.4.2.1 Place identity.

Place identity is defined as "dimensions of the self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment" (Proshansky, 1978, p. 155). Twigger-Ross & Uzzell (1996) argue that place identity plays an active part in the

construction of one's personal identity by allowing individuals to distinguish themselves from others. This process of differentiation can sometimes be aided by the identification with a particular space to further distinguish oneself from others. This process may also help individuals to learn more about their preferred environments and to seek out spaces that they feel comfortable in and that they are able to identify and associate with (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). It has also been suggested that humans have the tendency to seek out spaces that remind them of things familiar in their lives such as the 'feeling' of home, where they feel safe and comfortable with themselves (Marcus, 1992). These are all probable factors as to why a physical space, when endowed with human meaning, can also help to contribute to an individual's unique sense of identity. An example of how place plays a part in helping people distinguish themselves in the outdoor context can be seen from the perspective of a hypothetical individual, John, who recently completed an adventure race, the Southern Traverse, on New Zealand's South Island.

In perceiving himself as a 'Traverser' who has just spent six days travelling through remote locations on the South Island of New Zealand (The Southern Traverse, 2002), John's sense of being a traverser may be further contributed to by the feelings he derives when he is on the South Island. Having completed the race, John will have achieved a certain level of comfort in that space and is now able to identify strongly with it as the space that fits his self-perception of being a traverser. On a more general level, John can also see himself as an adventure racer and feels himself strongly embedded in wilderness situations, thus distinguishing himself from other users (e.g., hikers or mountain bikers) of the same natural area. Keeping in mind the vast dimensions of 'place', it should then not be hard to see why the place identity of individuals can also be

derived from spaces that they have never been to before; with a clear idea of the kind of spaces that they are comfortable in, individuals can sometimes derive a sense of place identity from places they may never have been to. This then speaks to the dynamism of the concept of place identity (Fried, 2000; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Proshanky, 1978).

Place identity is dynamic. For example, it has been argued that place identity may have more prominence in one's life as the frequency of visits to a particular area increases and as an individual ages (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000). This argument is based on the idea that the progression of time is likely to be accompanied by the accumulation of more experiences, and thus, the need to re-distinguish oneself as an individual throughout the lifespan will also be present. Dependent on the values endowed by individuals on a specific physical space, the role that a place can contribute to the individuals' life will also vary across their lifespan. Sometimes, the continuous changes in self-perception and identity can also cause one's place identity with a particular area to fade with time. As individuals' identities alter, the physical spaces that were once significant to them may not be that important anymore. It is therefore clear that because the human notion of 'place' changes over time, the contribution of a place to the identity of individuals will also decrease or increase accordingly (Schuett, 1994). Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that it is this dynamic concept of 'place identity' that continues to aid individuals in cultivating a sense of belonging and that will continually give meanings to their lives (Sharpe & Ewert, 2000).

2.4.2.2 Place dependence.

While place identity addresses the emotional and symbolic aspects of the human-environment relationship, place dependence accounts for the more functional aspects of the phenomena (Sharpe & Ewert, 2000). Defined as "a form of attachment associated with the potential of a particular place to satisfy the needs and goals of an individual" (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981, as cited in Williams et al., 1992, p.31), place dependence is essentially reliant on the expectations of the individual concerning a physical space (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983). In determining the ability of a space to satisfy their needs and goals, individuals also have to rely on past experiences with other spaces of a similar nature to make comparisons with respect to the appropriateness of one space being able to satisfy their needs over another. In this sense, individual's attachment to place is based in part on his/her dependency upon a particular space as being able to accommodate their needs. Unlike place identity, place dependence does not require that a space be one where an individual has had a pleasant/positive experience. This is because, without knowledge of other alternatives, individuals may also have to put up with spaces where they have had negative experiences because there is no other place that can cater to their needs and goals (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983). Thus, place dependence is a concept that includes issues of accessibility, available alternative sources and, in the outdoor context, "the importance that an individual attaches to the use of a particular recreation resource" (Jacob & Schreyer, 1980, p.373).

An example of place dependency may be illustrated by a group of Canadian adventure racers who are deciding on the geographic location of their next race. In determining the space that will meet their needs for a challenge, they may choose to join

a race in the Mojave desert in the south-western United States over a race held in the Canadian Rockies. This choice may be based on their preference for a warmer climate and a desire to challenge themselves in the extreme conditions found in the desert. Given the dynamics of place dependence, this form of place attachment tends to be less enduring in nature than place identity. Place dependence studies have, however, shown a proportionate increase in place dependence with an increase in frequency of use (Moore & Grafe, 1994). Thus, place dependence may be determined not only by the actual function of the space and past experiences but also by the frequency of use by the individual.

It must also be noted that although both place identity and place dependence combine to determine place attachment, they do not exist in any fixed proportion (Sharpe & Ewert, 2000). The attachment of an individual towards a particular place can be attributed to either a higher degree of place identity or place dependence. Depending on the individual's personality, moods, emotions, available resources (e.g., financial, social etc.), values, beliefs and other factors, the outcome of the attachment may also be manifested differently. From passive talk to active participation in local organisations, the different levels of attachment that one forms to a particular place will manifest itself in very different ways.

Noting the variations in how the identities, the needs, and the goals of individuals give rise to the different ways they relate to spaces, the above discussion has raised some of the key influencing variables in this particular study. However, while the focus of the study is to investigate the nature of the development of place attachment between adventure racers and their racing environments through their experiences, it is helpful to

explore another possible factor that can influence the formation of place attachment vis-à-vis control.

2.5 Control

Control is premised as being an important aspect of human life (Rothbaum, Weisz & Synder, 1982). Described as the perceived ability of an individual to significantly alter events, control has also been cited as an influencing factor in humans' attachment to places (Francis, 1989). This section details how control affects one's attachment to place, as well as the control mechanism that are exerted by humans to achieve this feeling of being in control.

2.5.1 *Establishing positive self-identity through control.*

In the human-environmental relationship, control over physical spaces can be exerted in a variety of ways. In the context of the urban environment, control over physical spaces has usually been in the form of active 'citizenship' where an individual is involved with organisations that have some influence over the planning of, development of, design of, and access to a space in a city (Francis, 1989). Accordingly, by being able to modify the physical space that individuals interact with to suit their needs and preferences, they attain a higher level of satisfaction with a space. This satisfaction can subsequently translate into a sense of attachment through "human action, visual involvement and the attachment of values" (Francis, p.148). As a result of individuals' being able to exert some sort of control over a physical space, their self-identity can also be strengthened, as they become more comfortable within a space they have some

influence over. While it is easy to see how the notion of control can come about in an urban setting, it is harder to conceptualise the idea of exerting control over a natural setting. Despite the fact that humans cannot always exert influence over the complex systems that exist in the natural world, human control in natural spaces occurs in a variety of ways. For example, a variety of strategies can be used in natural settings to pursue the objective of privacy—a way of maintaining control of your surroundings.

Recognised as a basic human need (Friedrich, Hatton, Naismith, Wensink & Priest, 1992; Hammitt & Brown, 1984; Newell, 1995), privacy can be defined as “a boundary control process in which the individual regulates with whom contact will occur and how much and what type of interaction it will be” (Pedersen, 1997, p. 147). In this sense, privacy can be seen to be a temporary time when an individual is able to maintain control over who gets access to them, while they seek out their desire for solitude, peace and time away from others. In the wilderness setting, the ability of individuals to control others’ access to them reflects a type of control over their environment. It may also become a factor that enhances the individual’s attachment to a wilderness space (Friedrich et al., Hammitt & Brown; Marcus, 1992).

Although privacy is an important feature in the experiences of North American wilderness users, little is known about how adventure racers experience it in the midst of engaging in a race (Friedrich et al., 1992; Hammitt & Brown, 1984; Hammit, Backman & Davis, 2001). Considering that participants in CARs usually have to move in teams of three or more, the moments where individuals have time alone for themselves may be rare (Frontier Adventure Racing, 2003). However, participants in single discipline MLARs may have more opportunities to experience these moments of privacy—when

they let down their hair' and can be themselves without having to hide or live up to anyone's expectations (Marcus, 1992). As with wilderness users, adventure racers who have had the opportunity to exert control over their racing environments by meeting their objective for privacy may also form a stronger attachment to their racing environments. Thus, while control in wilderness environments could be achieved in a variety of ways, the two main perspectives of interest in this study are those of primary control and secondary control.

2.5.1.1 Primary control.

Primary control is described as an attempt to influence the external world so that it is congruent with the needs and desires of an individual (Rothbaum et al., 1982; Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995). This is the desired form of control for most human beings, and its loss, often results in negative outcomes such as depression and withdrawal from society (Mirowsky, 1995; Schulz & Heckhausen, 1996). The two key characteristics that set primary control apart from secondary control are the target of the influence and the nature of the influence that is carried out.

In trying to shape the surroundings to accommodate an individual's needs and desires, the intended targets of primary control are mostly external environments or physical objects that are tangible (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995; Hettema & Hol, 1998). In an outdoor context, the intended targets of primary control can be conceptualised to be the surrounding physical environments (e.g., using a rope to traverse across a gorge) or the situations that we face while in the outdoors (e.g., trying to manipulate a particular situation to one's advantage). The nature of the influence, in this sense, is active and

action oriented (Heckhausen & Schulz). Applied to an adventure racer, the exertion of primary control during a race can be achieved in a variety of ways. Other than the physical manipulation of the racecourse, primary control can also be manifested in such races as the achievement of a particular placing in the race and/or the successful completion of the race.

The achievement of a particular position in an adventure race may represent one manifestation of primary control not only because of the success of participants' 'domination' over the natural environment but also because of its alignment with one of the goal orientations usually desired by athletes: the competitive goal orientation (Robert, 1992; Weinberg & Gould, 1995).

Competitive goal orientation is premised on the assumption that achievement in sports and exercise is really a means of demonstrating competence or ability (Dweck, 1986). Sometimes termed as ego involvement (Nicholls, 1984), competitive goal orientation is very much focused upon the outcome of the race. Accordingly, individuals driven by such orientation during their participation in a competitive sport will indulge in social comparisons, judging their successes based on the performances of others.

Motivated by drawing themselves into competition with others who are perceived to be worthy opponents, success is then derived when the individuals are able to outperform their fellow competitors. These competitors are usually peers with similar abilities, contemporaries who engage in a similar activity or popular figures who are well respected within the local sporting community.

The motivation behind the competitive goal orientation is a means of exerting primary control on the external environment in a race situation. It, therefore, seems likely

that the attachment of adventure racers to place may be influenced by their final positions in a race. The completion of the race will prove that an individual has managed to 'conquer' and negotiate successfully around the obstacles presented along the way. To complete a difficult race in the position that one had aspired to achieve would be a significant achievement for any adventure racer (Francis, 1989; Marcus, 1992). To win over peers, contemporaries and/or individuals who are well respected in the adventure racing community would likely enhance one's sense of positive self-identity. Thus, adventure racers who have the ability to negotiate a racecourse successfully and achieve a position in the competition may possibly relate to a physical space much differently. Given that the successful exertion of primary control has allowed them to experience a positive self-identity, their attachment to place may have been enhanced (Ittleson et al., 1976). On a similar note, dominating a physical space has been proposed as a way to enhance an individual's level of place attachment because the victory may hold more significance in their lives (Marcus). Thus, while it is quite possible that the successful completion of an adventure race may play a role in enhancing an individual's attachment to a racing environment, this assumption has not been tested. As a result, part of this study focuses on whether primary control is a factor that affects the adventure racer's attachment to their racing environments.

7 / When individuals are immersed in situations where they have to deal with a larger environment that they have little direct control over, secondary control becomes another factor of interest. Thought to be a more frequently used control mechanism in natural areas (Scherl, 1989), secondary control may also be a factor in influencing place attachment (Rothbaum et al., 1982).

2.5.1.2 Secondary control.

Often cited as the antithesis to primary control, secondary control can be described as an attempt to "fit in with the world" and to "flow with the current" (Rothbaum et al., 1982, p.8). Manifested in passive ways, secondary control strategies are most useful in situations when primary control is unsuccessful or absent (Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995; Hettema & Hol, 1998). As a buffer mechanism in such situations, secondary control acts as a way for humans to retain confidence in their ability to control their lives. It is also considered to be a developmental tool that enhances the potential for primary control during times when the latter is absent (Heckhausen & Schulz). Secondary control strategies can help offset losses in primary control as well as expand secondary control without "the individual having to physically engage the environment" (Heckhausen & Schulz, p.286). In the outdoor context, secondary control may be used as a mechanism to maintain individuals' positive self-identity (Scherl, 1989), thus enhancing their attachment to place (Rothbaum et al., 1982). Secondary control can be differentiated by two characteristics: the target of its influence and the resulting nature of such influence. Targeted at the internal aspect of self, secondary control is manifested more as a cognitive reaction than one that is action-oriented (Heckhausen & Schulz). This means that when secondary control is exerted, the resulting effects can be known only in the mind of an individual rather than through an external manifestation. The outward manifestation of secondary control can only be determined by the outcome of that exertion of secondary control. For example, an adventure racer, who is cold and wet, may feel unable to continue his/her race, but upon the exertion of secondary control (e.g., convincing herself of her abilities to endure hardship and overcome), still manage to

overcome and complete the race. In this scenario, only the adventure racer knows about his/her exertion of control, while outsiders can only speculate on his/her use of secondary control simply by the successful completion of the race.

Studies done by Scherl (1989) support the idea that human beings tend to exert strategies of self-control more frequently in outdoor/wilderness situations. Understood as a way of learning to adapt to conditions that are presented to humans by nature, self-control is conceptualized as a type of secondary control where individuals are likely to internalize their exertion of control via the process of cognition. Self-control, in the wilderness settings can thus be aligned with the idea of secondary control. In the context of adventure racing, how secondary control can be aligned with the goal-orientations of the adventure racer still needs to be examined.

Similar to the conceptualization of secondary control is the goal orientation of mastery (Wienberg & Gould, 1995). In comparison with competitive goal orientation, the mastery goal-orientated athlete is more likely to concentrate on the learning and mastering of a skill, as opposed to competing with others (Robert, 1992). Sometimes also known as task involvement (Nicholls, 1984), mastery goal orientation allows athletes to focus internally on how they have been able to build their skills and whether their current performance reflects improvement relative to their previous performances (Weinberg & Gould). Thus, success or failure in this case is dependent upon learning and/or improving in a selective skill. The mastery goal orientation aligns itself with the concepts of secondary control with the intended target being the internal self, and the nature of the influence being cognition.

From the perspective of an adventure racer with a mastery goal orientation, it is likely that place attachment to the racing environments can be gained if the individual manages to achieve something considered to be significant in their racing 'life.' Based on Marcus' (1992) argument that humans are more likely to form attachments to spaces where a significant moment in their lives has occurred, it can also be assured that a positive self-identity can be a result of such moments as well. Therefore, if a significant achievement for an adventure racer is being able to complete a 120 km stretch of a race course instead of only 90 km as anticipated before the race, it can then be assumed that the racer will also derive some sense of positive self-identity. It may then be this experience of positive self-identity that can play a part in the way individuals will relate to the spaces they race in. Once again, such an assumption has not been tested. Therefore, a part of the study is designed to determine whether the exertion of secondary control by an adventure racer during the race affects his or her subsequent attachment to the physical space he/she travelled through.

Primary and secondary control do not exist independently of each other. It is important to note that human control is often a combination of both. The main difference in terms of the percentage of either primary or secondary control utilized by one individual as opposed to another could be attributed to factors such as goal-orientations (in competitive environments), culture (Morling, 2000), age, gender (McConatha & Huba, 1999) and past experiences (Lacković-Grgin, Grgin, Penezić & Sorić, 2001). Although these latter four factors have not been actively discussed in this chapter and in the study itself, sensitivity towards them was maintained throughout the discovery and analysis process.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter was intended to position the study within the context of the literature. The nature of adventure racing and literature referring to the environmental effects caused by popular outdoor recreation activities opened the chapter. The phases of the outdoor recreation experience were then discussed, and the concepts of sense of place, place attachment and its two dimensions of place identity and dependence, were then defined to clarify these concepts. The latter parts of the chapter highlighted the importance of key identities for adventure racers and how these identities affect their eventual needs and goals. It was argued that these identities have a direct relationship to the way that these individuals relate to their environment! Having gained an understanding of some of the motivations driving adventure racers in their pursuits, the experience of positive self-identity was also suggested as a potential factor that influences attachment to place. Finally, a section of how primary and secondary control could affect one's sense of place attachment during a race was discussed.

Ultimately, it is important to note that place attachment describes the positive affective bond between a human and a specific place, and thus the experience within any given space has to be generally favourable before this connection can be formed. This chapter has highlighted the key factors influencing the place attachment of adventure racers to their racing environments, as outlined in the literature. With the above in mind, a better context can be given to the overarching question of this study, which is to find out if participation in a mid-length adventure race fosters an attachment to the racing environment. In addition, a better understanding of the influencing factors may also

provide some insights into the sub-question of the study that asks whether a sense of control affects the place attachment of mid-length adventure race participants.

Chapter III *Methods*

"There is no universally right or wrong culture of inquiry: each has its own strengths and limitations..." (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p.87).

3.1 Introduction

A research methodology is needed to explore the place attachment of MLAR participants to their racing environments. Such a methodology should facilitate access into the experiences of these participants from their own perspectives. This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study. Following an overview of the Canadian Death Run (CDR), the underlying philosophy used to guide the study and the methods of data collection and analysis are explained. Finally, the chapter concludes with an introduction to the study's respondents and the emergent themes that will be detailed in the chapters to follow.

3.2 Mid-Length Adventure Race (MLAR): The 2002 Canadian Death Run (CDR)

Inaugurated in 2000, the CDR is one of the three annual events in the Canadian Death Race Series, which also includes the Canadian Death Ride and the Canadian Death Snowshoe Race (Canadian Death Race, 2002). Held over the long weekend of August in the town of Grande Cache, Alberta, the CDR is touted to be one of the toughest MLARs in Canada. The CDR is open to relay teams (consisting of five runners) and solo participants. The race consists of five stages totalling 125 km in distance, three mountain summits (with a 5181.6 metres (m) elevation change), and several creek crossings (sometimes with knee high water levels). Relay teams and solo participants have only 24 hours to complete the race.

Figure 2: Provincial location of Grande Cache, Alberta⁸

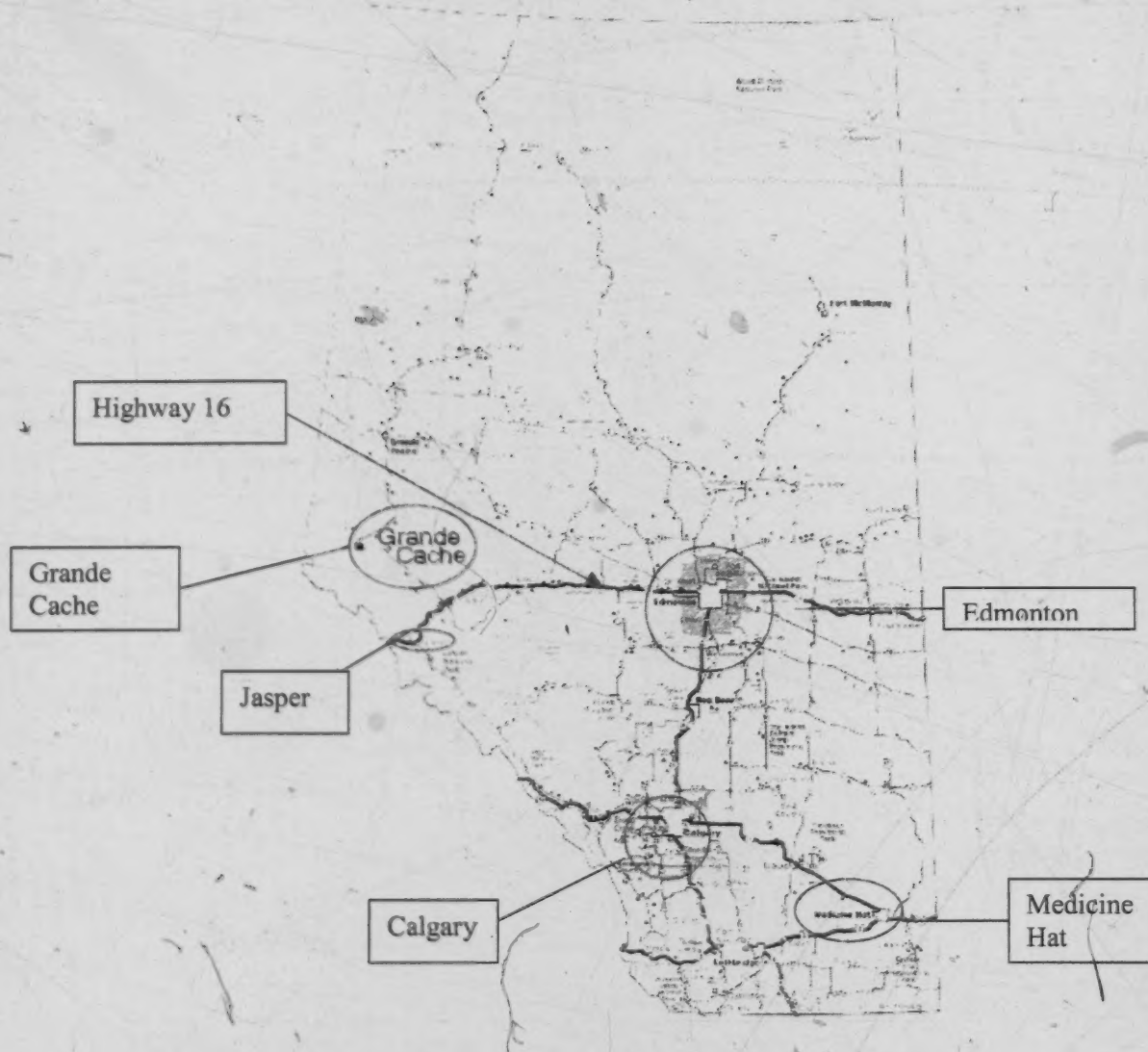


Figure 2. Location of Grande Cache, as it is situated on the north-west-west corner of the province of Alberta, in relation to the provincial capital, Edmonton, and other major tourism and business centres.

⁸ From "Welcome to the Town of Grande Cache: Maps (Alberta)" by Town of Grande Cache, 2003, <http://www.town.grandecache.ab.ca/altamap.jpg>. (Accessed 27 May 2003)

Figure 3. Topographic Map of the 'Death Trail'⁹

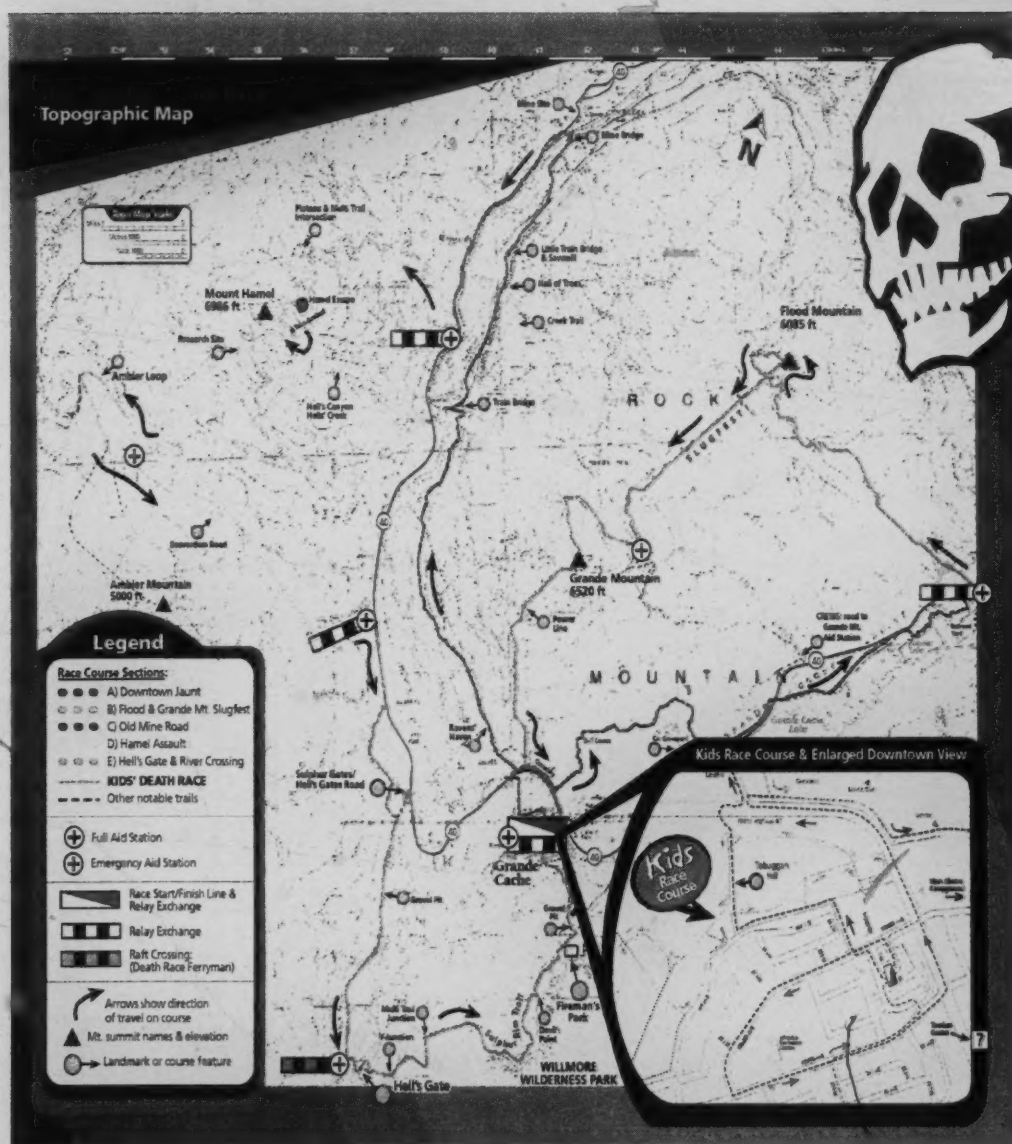


Figure 3. Topographic map of the 'Death Trail', the official race route of the 2002 Canadian Death Run. The different colours depict the five different stages of the race.

⁹⁹ From "Canadian Death Race Topographic Map" by Canadian Death Race, 2003, http://www.canadiandeathrace.com/Templates/mainpage_nameset.html. (Accessed 28 May 2003)

Like most other MLARs, the CDR is run on the 'Death' Trail (Figure 3), which, in this case, cuts across the natural areas surrounding Grande Cache (Appendix A). Located on the northern tip of the Canadian Rockies, Grande Cache is a town of 4,000 residents and is situated on a mountain plateau 1280.2 m above sea level (Town of Grande Cache, 2000). The natural subregions surrounding the north and northeast corners of the town are varied and range from the upper foothills to the subalpine region (Achuff, 1992). Surrounding the northern corner of the town, the upper-foothills region generally consists of coniferous forests dominated by white spruce, black spruce, and lodgepole pine. The wildlife population inhabiting these subregions consists of elk, black bear, grizzly bear, and a variety of birds such as the ruby-crowned kinglet and white-crowned sparrow. Some of these same animals and birds can also be found in the higher subalpine regions. Divided into two portions, the lower subalpine region is generally characterized by closed forests of lodgepole pine, Englemann spruce, and subalpine fir. The upper subalpine subregions are home to "spruce-fir closed forest and open forest near the treeline" (Achuff, p.28). These regions, therefore, support a variety of wildlife: birds such as grey jays and yellow rumped warblers, big animals such as marten, and deer mouse, and squirrels such as the red and golden mantle squirrel. This subalpine region is located mainly on the mountain peaks surrounding Grande Cache. The town is also surrounded on three sides by Willmore Wilderness Park, a protected area spanning more than 4,000 square kilometres (sq. km) of the northern Rockies. Famous for its high alpine meadows and peaks towering above 2438.4 m, Willmore Wilderness Park is accessible only by foot or horseback. The Park bans all forms of motorized vehicle and recreational equipment

(Town of Grande Cache). Given its wealth of natural resources, it is no surprise that the mainstay of Grande Cache's economy is resource-based.

A resource town whose economy¹⁰ was and still is fuelled mainly through income derived from mining, logging, and pulp processing, Grande Cache has recently been trying to cash in on the tourism market as well (Town of Grande Cache, 2000). The oil and gas industry has, also recently, been carrying out exploration projects (i.e., the laying of seismic lines for oil exploration tests) in the forests surrounding Grande Cache (Personal communications, Tuck, D., August 2002). Despite these recent developments, the town of Grande Cache and its surroundings are still relatively isolated from the main tourists flows because of the long drive required from the main east-west highway in the vicinity (Highway 16). This relative isolation, varied terrain, and extreme climatic conditions have made Grande Cache a suitable place for the 'Death' Trail—the official name of the route of the 2002 CDR.

A single-discipline mid-length adventure race, the 2002 CDR is a foot race that requires participants to run about 12% on paved road and 78% on trails or gravel. Appendix B indicates the elevation differences during the 5 stages of the 'Death' Trail, which all solo participants in the race had to run through. Given that some of these areas were accessible only via horses (Canadian Death Race Series, 2002), solo competitors in this race were likely to experience extreme isolation. This study's respondents were selected from the solo participants in this mid-length adventure race.

For the 2002 CDR held on August 3rd and 4th, 621 racers, together with their supporters, descended upon Grande Cache, Alberta, ready to take on the 125km 'Death'

¹⁰ Many of the residents in Grande Cache are also employees at the Federal Penitentiary located just on the outskirts of Grande Cache.

Trail. These races included 105 relay teams (with five members each) and 106 solo participants from mainly Alberta and north-eastern British Columbia. The rest of the solo participants were mainly Canadians from other parts of the country (Canadian Death Race, 2002). This study focused on the experiences of 7 males and 6 females who were solo participants in the race.

In an attempt to secure respondents and to operate within the budget limitations of the study, participants recruited for this study were from Edmonton (all the male runners and one female runner), St Paul, Calgary and Medicine Hat. A voluntary recruitment method was used to approach the participants, either on registration day or through the recruitment notices posted earlier on the Death Run Chat Room. With the exception of one 16-year old female respondent, the other respondents were aged from 29-60 years old. Table 1 presents the criteria for the selection of these informants.

Table 1

Criteria and rationale for the selection of study subjects

Criterion	Rationale
Participant in the solo section of the CDR	The intended study focuses on the specific area of Grande Cache, Alberta, Canada. The attempt was to minimize the social dynamic associated with the relay teams.
Resident of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.	To minimize occurrences of large differences in the participants' concepts of the wilderness.
Male/Female participant fluent in both written and spoken English	To ensure maximum communication of thoughts, ideas and descriptions both in the questionnaire survey and the interview
Non-resident of Grande Cache	To focus on 'place attachment' rather than 'sense of place.' Residents may tend to be more rooted to Grande Cache and thus may already be attached to place prior to the race.

3.3 Epistemology, Theoretical Perspective and Methodology

A qualitative study rooted in the epistemological approach of constructivism was chosen to carry out this inquiry. Given that much of the research done in the area of the human-environment relationship has been of a pre-deterministic, quantitative nature (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Fishwick & Vining, 1992; Moore & Grafe, 1994; Seamon, 1982), an interpretive approach provides a new type of insight. This approach not only allows for the findings obtained to be 'grounded' in the data, but also provides more

descriptive information which can complement the results of existing quantitative studies (Bricker & Kerstetter).

Taking an interpretive approach is suitable for subjective phenomenon such as place attachment as an individual's perception and relation to a geographic space is influenced by his/her personal attitudes, beliefs, and preferences (Crotty, 1998). "[A]s far as human affairs are concerned, any understanding of causation comes through an interpretive understanding of social action and involves an explanation of relevant and antecedent phenomena as meaning complexes" (Crotty, p. 69). Guided by this belief, the methodology used in this study is that of phenomenology.

Phenomenology attempts to systematically "...uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures of lived experience" (Van Manen, 1990, p.10). Although phenomenology does not provide a comprehensive theory that can be used to explain place attachment, it offers insights that can bring us closer to the phenomenon itself. Any human experience can be studied via the methodology of phenomenology because it accepts multiple views on how one phenomenon can be experienced, thus allowing for varied opinions, including those that may not agree with current conventional academic belief (Seamon, 2000). In this case, believing that context for the human experiences is provided by the surrounding environments, taking the phenomena back to those who have 'experienced,' allows the researcher, to gain access into the lifeworlds of individuals who have experienced the phenomena (Crotty, 1998). Gaining access into the particular lifeworlds of the selected participants in the 2002 CDR provides the opportunity to gain insight into the phenomenon of place attachment in relation to the Grande Cache racing environment.

The type of phenomenology used in this study is sometimes termed as 'existential phenomenology research,' where insights about the phenomenon being studied can be made based on the experiences of specific individuals and groups directly involved in the situation (von Eckarsberg, 1998a). This type of research consists of a few basic steps (von Eckarsberg, 1998b). First, the researcher has to identify the phenomenon of interest. The phenomenon of interest here was that of place attachment. Second, access to this kind of phenomenon is obtained through the participants' descriptions of their own experiences. In this study, these experiences were those of the participant's in the 2002 CDR. Third, after the descriptions are obtained, they have to be carefully studied to identify underlying commonalities and patterns—while also noting differences. In attempting to understand the phenomenon of 'place attachment' and to learn how it could have developed among the participants in the CDR, I considered the tenets of phenomenology to be the most appropriate way for gaining new insights.

To add reflexivity into this approach of discovery, I have also tried to 'bracket' my own experiences, conceptions, and idiosyncrasies regarding the phenomenon of place attachment. This exercise was not intended to block out my own experiences, but, rather, to enable me to be critical of them and to be conscious of how they might influence my interpretation of the data. In addition, such reflexivity was also be applied to the findings so that I could also become aware of the aspects of a phenomenon previously unknown or usually ignored (Kvale, 1996).

To allow for the further exploration of the many ways in which people experience space and natural landscapes, I also used phenomenology to obtain a less 'objective' viewpoint than that adopted by traditional studies of human-environment relationships

(Seamon, 1982; 1987). While there is no single way for existential-phenomenology studies to be conducted (Moustakas, 1994; Semon, 2000), the long interview method was chosen in this study due to the richness of data that usually results and due the feasibility of completing the research in a timely and economical manner.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Two data collection methods were used in a complementary fashion for this study. Consistent with the fundamentals of phenomenology, the main method of data collection was that of the individual long interview. Prior to the long interview, however, the respondents completed a pre-race questionnaire survey.

In attempting to track possible changes that may have occurred in the level of place attachment before and after the race, I asked the 13 respondents to complete an open-ended questionnaire prior to the date of the event. Five of them were completed in the week leading up to the race, and the other eight were completed during the registration for the race—a day prior to the event. The brief responses obtained from these pre-race questionnaires provided me with useful insights. I later used them to adapt some of questions to be asked during the post-race interviews. Another benefit of the pre-race questionnaire was that it provided general demographic data, and knowing the occupational backgrounds of the respondents enhanced my understanding of their point of view. While limited research has been published on the topic of place attachment by using pre- and post-event tests, Vaske and Korbin (2001) have suggested that such a study should include these tests in order to obtain an accurate account of how an activity can potentially affect individuals' attachment to a place. The self-administered

questionnaire used in this present study's pre-race survey followed the framework of a similar study done by Moore and Grafe in 1994.

In their quantitative study of rail-trail users in the USA and their attachment to recreational spaces, Moore and Grafe (1994) used a modified version of the place attachment scale created by Williams and Roggenbuck (1989). Using a five-point Likert scale reflecting a range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), Moore and Grafe were able to find significant results reflecting the attachment of rail-trail users to their recreational places. The questions used for the pre-race questionnaire of this study were adapted from the questions used in Moore and Grafe's study of rail-trail users. Table 2 presents the modified questions used in this study and the original questions used in the 1994 study.

Table 2

Questions used in Pre-Race Questionnaire

Modified Questions used in Pre-Race Questionnaire	Original Questions from Moore & Grafe (1994) ¹¹
• Can you recall a particular trail that you have ran on and really liked? Where was the trail? • Have you been to Grande Cache before? Or ran in a trail there at all? If so, where?	I enjoy doing the type of things that I do here more than in any other area I get more satisfaction out of visiting this trail than from visiting any other.
• Was there anything special about that place? Do you go back to it now? • What do you think of the environs around Grande Cache? Would you like to spend more time in the area?	I wouldn't substitute any other area for doing the type of things I do here. No other trail can compare to this one This trail means a lot to me. I am very attached to this trail.
• Do you think the Death Run would be the same if it was held outside of Grande Cache? Why?	I identify strongly with this trail
Questions used in Pre-Race Questionnaire	Concepts of Sport Motivational Goal Orientation ¹² :
• Will completing the Death Run be considered an achievement for you? Why? • What do you aim to achieve in the Death Run, other than to complete it? Is there a particular rank or goal that you hope to achieve?	Competitive Goal Orientation Mastery Goal Orientation

¹¹ From "Attachment to recreation settings: The case of rail-trail users" R.L. Moore & A.R. Grafe, 1994, *Leisure Sciences*, 16, p.27.

¹² From "Motivation in sport and exercise: Conceptual constraints and convergence." C.G. Robert, 1992, *Motivation in sport and exercise*.

The pre-race questionnaire (Appendix C) was approximately three pages in length. It was distributed to the selected respondents prior to the race, with a participant information sheet explaining the objectives, and nature of this study, and the 'neutral' parties involved in it. The letter also explained this study's ethical guidelines. Each respondent who agreed to the terms for participation in this study signed the consent form (Appendix D).

A post-race interview was carried out within a month of the race. Respondents were contacted and arrangements made for interviews to be conducted from mid-August to mid-September. The study started off with 13 respondents; however, two of them were eventually omitted from the post-race interview because of incompatible schedules and work commitments. Thus, while the data obtained in the pre-race survey contributed to the study, the major focus of the analysis was on the post-race interview process, which captured the respondents' lived experiences and thoughts.

The long (post-race) interviews provided access to the respondents' experiences and also captured a range of possible meanings and experiences that had not been previously articulated (Gaskell, 2000; McCracken, 1988; Moustakas, 1994). To ensure that high-quality data were obtained, the interview and analysis process had to be conducted rigorously. In accordance with McCracken's four-part process (see Figure 1), the interviews signalled the start of Stage 3. Stage 3 consisted of two steps: the preparation for the interviews and their administration. The interview preparation involved the construction of the interview questionnaire and sample selection.

3.4.1 *Constructing the interview questionnaire.*

The interview guide, essentially a visual guide and an outline of the interview process (Gaskell, 2000), was constructed by articulating the questions to be asked during the interviews in an orderly fashion. Approaching the study from a phenomenological perspective also meant that the interview questions had to be worded to help interviewees recall and re-live their experiences (Patton, 1987; Van Manen, 1990). The interview guide was semi-structured in nature and consisted of a list of key questions that would focus the respondent on the topic of interest in the study (Patton). A semi-structured interview also encouraged respondents to be the main voice within reasonably relevant limits¹³. With questions progressing from a general to a more specific nature, the interview guide totalled two pages and also included interview questions, prompts, and miscellaneous details as suggested by McCracken (1988) and Creswell (1998), such as

- **Grand Tour Questions (GTQ):** Questions that 'induce' the participant to provide information without having to ask a direct question. Usually the general question pertaining directly to the topic of interest.
- **Floating prompts (FP):** Careful exploitation of several features of everyday speech—e.g., raising an eyebrow when the participant goes into utterance to hint for him/her to elaborate further on that issue.
- **Planned prompts (PP):** Prompts which give respondents a hint to expand their comments if an interesting point has not been fully explained. It is advisable to use the terms that the respondents have used first and when these terms are exhausted, then perhaps the interviewer could use terms "culled from the literature and cultural reviews" (McCracken, 1988, p.35). It is important that these prompts come out only at the end of the question category because if the prompts are given earlier, the respondents might be led to think they should include the use of such terms.
- Sufficient space in between questions in order to accommodate notes as well as backup should the audio recorder fail to operate.

¹³ The interviewer should allow the respondent to speak to any issue relevant to the topic of interest but also should keep the respondent 'on track.'

- Reminder to thank the interviewees at the end of the interview and assure them of the confidentiality of the study and their replies.

Appendix E presents a sample of the questions used during the interviews. A brief rationale for the questions posed in the interview is also provided following each question.

Both the pre-race questionnaire and post-race interviews were pre-tested with one fellow student who has had experience in marathon running and outdoor recreational activities. Given her experience as a long time runner, the pre-test provided rather interesting insights into the potential answers of the respondents. With the completion of the interview guide, all 13 of the respondents to the pre-race questionnaire were contacted, and arrangements were made for the interviews.

3.4.2 Selecting the respondents.

Through the purposeful sampling method, 13 respondents were selected from amongst the solo participants in the 2002 CDR. As "the real purpose of qualitative research is not counting opinions or people but rather exploring the range of opinions [and] the different representations of the issue," (Gaskell, 2000, p.41), the respondents selected through this method were perceived as suitable because they were able to provide the researcher with pertinent information (McCracken, 1988; Creswell, 1998; Gaskell). Ensuring not only quality in research, purposeful (criterion) sampling was also a way to help enhance the credibility of the researcher and also that of this study's results.

Eventually, only 11 out of the initial 13 respondents were interviewed after the race. Out of operational interest, it was decided that the other 2 respondents would not be interviewed, as they were not available until six weeks after the race. The length of the

time that would have lapsed between then and the occurrence of the race would have been long enough to result in possible memory error. At that point, the amount of information collected via the 11 interviews had also already been quite overwhelming. Recommending between eight to 12 respondents as a suitable number for long interviews, McCracken (1988) and Gaskell (2000) cautioned that interviewing any more respondents could potentially cause some information to be lost during the data-analysis process.

3.4.3 Respondents' profiles.

The profiles of the 11 respondents who took part in the study are presented below. They are represented by pseudonyms, many of which were selected by the respondents themselves. In the remaining chapters, the respondents will be referred to by their pseudonyms.

Participant No. 1 (Python)

Python is a 35-year-old male and self-employed. Python has been a runner for 18 years and has run, biked, hiked and paddled throughout Canada, Europe and parts of Asia. An outdoorsman, Python was participating for the third time in the Death Run after two successful previous races. He is also a triathlete.

Participant No. 2 (Cheetah)

Cheetah is a 42-year-old male and works as a plant manager. He has been running (mainly road) for some 26 years and has competed around the world. He is also an avid triathlete who has represented Canada in several international competitions. This was Cheetah's first attempt at the Death Run, and his stated intention was to win, in his running category.

Participant No. 3 (Moose Bait)

Moose Bait is a 34-year-old male and works as a manager at his work place. Moose Bait has been running for 10 years. He has competed in many places across Alberta, North

America and Europe. He loves the sport of ultra-running. This competition was Moose Bait's third attempt at the Death Run after two successful previous races.

Participant No. 4 (Karakonte—Travelling Sun)

Karakonte is a 55-year-old male and works as a firefighter. He has been running for about 10 years and was active in a variety of track events (e.g., race walking) before he took up running. Karakonte has run in marathons and some interesting road runs (e.g., the Jasper-Banff Relay) in Canada and North America. He has also participated in the Worlds Firefighters' Games. Having run the last leg (Leg Five) of a relay team in the Death Run in 2001, Karakonte was back to attempt the entire Death Trail by himself in 2002.

Participant No. 5 (Old Smokey)

Old Smokey is a 46-year-old male and currently, a student in a professional faculty at the University of Alberta. No stranger to Grande Cache, he visits this town often because his parents moved to Grande Cache during the 70s. However, he has not lived there. A runner for about two years, Old Smokey has run in marathons in Edmonton and also ran in a relay team at the Death Run 2001. Having managed to successfully complete the toughest leg (Leg Four) in the Death Run 2001, Old Smokey was attempting his first solo Death Run in 2002.

Participant No 6 (Bear Scare)

Bear Scare is a 30-year-old female and a physical education teacher by profession. She was barely four months into the sport of trail running when she attempted the 2002 CDR. The 2002 CDR also happened to be her first foot race. She entered the run with her husband.

Participant No 7. (LaGazelle)

LaGazelle is a 40-year-old female and an inspirational speaker/adventurer by profession. She has been running on and off throughout her life, but more so in the last three years. LaGazelle has taken part in several long runs in some exotic environments and has an affinity towards running in desert environments. Entering the race with a bad hip, she was attempting the 2002 CDR for the first time.

Participant No. 8 (Tigger)

Tigger is a 36-year-old female and a clerk by profession. She has been running for six years and had completed numerous trail races and marathons including some runs in exotic parts of the world. Tigger was attempting the Death Run for the first time in 2002.

Participant No. 9 (Cedar)

Cedar is a 41-year-old female and a personal/team trainer by profession. She has been running for 15 years and has had numerous experiences in both road and trail runs. A

lover of running on single tracks in the backcountry, Cedar was attempting the Death Run for the first time and was there to win.

Participant No. 10 (Violet)

Violet is a 37-year-old female and a dental assistant by profession. She had been running for 12 years and has had some experience in running marathons in Canadian cities. Violet was attempting the 2002 CDR for the first time, together with her husband and daughter (Jo).

Participant No. 11 (Jo)

Jo is a 16-year-old female and currently a high school student. She has been running for about four years and has participated in some half marathons as well as represented her school in cross-country competitions across Alberta. Together with her mother and father, she was attempting the Death Run for the first time.

3.4.4 Interview.

For each interview, time was allotted to review any ethical concerns the respondents might have had. Essentially, it was a reminder of the terms of participation that they had agreed to previously. As per the recommendations of the Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, all respondents had signed a consent form prior to completing the pre-race questionnaire.

The interviews outside of Edmonton took place mainly in the living rooms of the respondents' homes in the cities of St Paul, Medicine Hat, and Calgary, Alberta. In Edmonton, the interviews took place in a classroom at the University of Alberta and a conference room at one respondent's work place. While no major disturbances arose during the interviews, a few were interrupted by lawn mowers, telephone calls, and the arrival of children.¹⁴ Despite those minor disturbances, the interview locations were all conducive for the proper operation of the automated recording devices, allowing me to

¹⁴ One participant had kindly offered her time to participate in the interview just hours after arriving home from a run in the Yukon and therefore wanted to greet her children, whom she had not seen for 4 days.

concentrate on responding to cues and words needing further elaboration or explanation (Creswell, 1998).

The interviews were all conducted under comfortable conditions and were filled with laughter and fond reminiscences of the 2002 CDR. Rapport with the respondents was established rather easily in all the interviews. The previous contacts made with the respondents before and during the 2002 CDR likely contributed to the friendly atmosphere during the interviews. Having been at the race also provided me with a certain advantage as I could relate to some of the experiences related by the respondents more easily.

Throughout the interview, I retained a neutral stance and tried to speak as little as possible, so as to allow the respondent to relate their stories to me with little interruptions (McCracken, 1988; Moustakas, 1994). While I had to periodically draw the respondents back on topic, they were enthusiastic and attentive individuals eager to share and re-live their 2002 CDR experience. The average time for each interview process was from 45-60 minutes.

At the end of each interview, the respondents were asked if they had any additional feedback or questions that may have arisen throughout the interview (McCracken, 1988). All 11 respondents replied positively to the offer of a report of the final results and seemed enthusiastic at the prospect of viewing them. When the data collection was completed, each interview was transcribed to facilitate analysis.

The interviews were transcribed within a week of the occurrence, resulting in a total of 180 pages. Each transcription was checked three times: once immediately after it had been done, and twice after a two to three day period to ensure that nothing had been

missed or misunderstood. This data was stored in computer diskettes, with back-up diskettes available, and made ready for the analysis process. The transcriptions were done verbatim except for a few changes, such that:

- The longer pauses were reduced and the repeated words and phrases were omitted.
- The abbreviations such as 'don't,' 'can't,' and 'haven't' were changed to formal English phrases such as 'do not,' 'cannot,' and 'have not.'
- The laughing sounds were noted and identified in the transcription in order to indicate the contexts that the respondents were referring to and also to reflect the moods that they were in during specific stages of the Death Run. Facial expressions were also noted to provide a context for the interviews.

While the literature has often advised that transcriptions be done verbatim to ensure that the 'tone' and the 'mood' of an interview have been captured, the level of detail can vary depending on the intended purposes of a study (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Accordingly, because I wanted this study to obtain the respondents' descriptions of their re-lived experiences, and not to use the data for discourse or conversational analysis, the type of editing done was defensible. After the transcripts had been edited, they were then mailed to the respondents to seek their comments or corrections. By doing so, I increased the study's reliability by sending the transcripts back to the respondents, who may have forgotten to reveal some important or crucial insights during the interviews. Eventually, seven respondents suggested some minor changes. As the researcher, I have chose to have the final say on the recommended changes being made (Seale, 1999), and therefore, the changes made only added content to the data that was obtained earlier. However,

there were no alterations made to the meanings of the statements made earlier. To become familiar with the data, I read the transcripts several times before analysing the data. Immersing myself in the data gave me a good sense of some of their re-occurring themes or patterns (Gaskell, 2000).

3.4.5 Data analysis.

Deemed a demanding stage of the inquiry process, the analysis of the data¹⁵ was carried out systematically. Keeping in mind the subjective nature of the phenomenological approach and the potential for the researcher to interpret data through his or her previous experiences, I constantly focused on the quality (i.e., reliability and validity) of the results while I analysed the data.

A common dilemma faced by researchers using the phenomenological approach is the lack of reliability in such studies because of the interpretation of the data. As human interpretation is forever flawed,¹⁶ it is generally recognised that two interpretations of the same occurrence can be very different (Seamon, 2000). Therefore, Seamon suggests employing intersubjective corroboration, which requires a researcher to ask if other individuals, in their own lives and experiences, could directly or vicariously relate to what the researcher has found in his or her data. The interpretations in this study only represent my view of the data. The objective at the end of the exercise is then not to ensure that another position with respect to the original descriptions could be adopted, but

¹⁵ 'Data' in this section refers to both statements obtained from the pre-race questionnaires and the post-race interviews.

¹⁶ 'Flawed' in the sense that it is likely to be 'partial,' and for different interpretations can always be made of the same data set (Seamon, 2000)

rather if a reader, adopting the same viewpoints as the researcher, can also see what he/she saw, regardless of whether he or she agrees with it (Giorgi, 1985).

After having immersed myself in the data and mentally noting the emerging themes, I loaded the data for both the pre-race questionnaire and post-race interviews into NUD•IST, and subsequently coded, retrieved, and linked them together with information from different respondents. Although NUD•IST is a powerful software program, capable of complex functions such as interfacing and comparing texts from different sources, I did not use it fully in the analysis of the data. Adhering to the aims of phenomenological research, I used the following steps suggested by Creswell (1998) as a guide for the analysis of data:

- Find and list statements of meaning for individuals
- Group statements into meaningful units
- Develop a textural description of "What happened"
- Develop a structural description of "how" the phenomenon was experienced
- Develop an overall description of the experience, the "essence"

(p.149)

Following an initial round of coding, statements speaking to a similar theme were subsequently grouped together and the process repeated again, within these clusters of themes. Emerging themes were analysed further, allowing for sub-themes to surface. In turn, the sub-themes that emerged were put through the same process once again, allowing for more themes within them to surface. This process was repeated until no other themes seemed to emerge. At this point, a summary of the textual descriptions was developed by recording and grouping together the rich descriptions that spoke to similar

themes. The structural description of 'how' the phenomenon was experienced is presented in the following chapters.

Although the pre-race questionnaire was analysed via a question-by-question analysis, the order of the analysis was the same as that for the data obtained from the interviews. The only difference in that process was that the statements made in reply to a particular question were grouped together, so that themes were allowed to emerge, rather than analyzing the statements out of context of the question and looking for common themes.

3.5 Emerging Themes

In order to find out if place attachment had occurred in the process of the competition in the wilderness, pre-race questionnaires and post-race interviews were used. To learn what kind of environments the respondents preferred and whether they had formed a special bond with the racing environment, respondents were asked to describe their experience of the race. As well, they were also asked about their attitudes towards races, running, and life in general. Although interviewers are cautioned against leading a participant (Patton, 1987), any interview will invariably involve some sort of leading, because an interview is always directed at a specific topic of interest (Kvale, 1996). Hence, although some of the five themes presented below were expected, some of the statements relating to the themes were rather surprising.

In Chapter IV, the theme of identity is discussed. The identities and various roles that the Death Runners attributed to themselves were closely related to the kinds of spaces and environments they felt an affinity to. Whereas this chapter provides an

understanding of the 11 respondents' points of view, Chapter V reveals their lived experiences of the race and provides a detailed discussion of their thoughts and feelings while fighting against all odds to finish the race. Finally, Chapter VI discusses how the respondents remembered the 'Death Trail', shedding new light on aspects of place attachment previously not noted in the literature.

3.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter III summarized the philosophical perspective, methodology, and specific methods applied in this study. As well, the rationale for the selection of the event and the respondents selected to take part in this study was explained. This chapter provided a thorough understanding of why and how this research project was performed. The following chapters are intended to provide insight into the respondents' lifeworlds and experiences at the 2002 CDR, in relation to the phenomenon of place attachment and the theoretical concepts that have been presented in this chapter.

Chapter IV

Social Psychological Profile of the Respondents

We designed the Canadian Death Race to ask one question and one question alone, "Are you tough enough?" It's time to put up or shut up. Park your ego at the door. The gloves are off, the training is over, now its time to find out if you've got what it takes to complete one of the toughest adventure races in the world. You must come totally committed, fully prepared and well trained. (Canadian Death Race Series, 2002, <http://www.canadiandeathrace.com>)

4.1 Introduction

Responses from the pre-race questionnaires and the post-race interviews revealed the social-psychological profiles of the respondents. Two of the main themes that emerged from these questionnaires and interviews involved identity and motivations. As the literature has suggested, individuals' perceptions of themselves in relation to their physical environments encompass many aspects of the self such as beliefs, values, meanings, attitudes, and behavioural tendencies (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001; Proshanky, 1978).

Chapter IV presents a profile of respondents' identities and motivations. These findings emerged from the interviews, following the completion of the 2002 CDR. The findings provide insight into how the respondents perceived themselves in their recreational lives. A comparison is made between respondents' self-perceived identities and the characteristics typical of sports-adventure tourists. The respondents' motivations for participating in the activity of running and the 2002 CDR were highlighted. In many cases, these motivations were common to those of sports and adventure tourists, in that they revolved around the desire of the participants to compete against themselves and others (Hall, 1992), to 'explore' and seek out new places (Priest & Ballie, 1987), and to face both known and unknown challenges (Ewert & Shultis, 1997). By presenting the

respondents' self-perceptions and motivations for running and racing, the intent of this chapter is to provide an understanding of how the respondents related to their racing environments.

4.2 Death Runners: Who are they?

The identities of individuals are constantly evolving over their lifespan, so that individuals often have a variety of self-identities, at different points in their lives. Despite the many differences among the respondents (e.g., family, marital status and occupations), they were all unified by their common identity as runners. As running is an activity that can be carried out almost anywhere, a detailed description of the respondents' self-perception—beyond their identities as runners—indicates the more specific spaces to which they had a shared affinity.

4.2.1 Active individuals.

While mid-length adventure racers necessarily have to be physically active, the respondents' levels of activity varied considerably. Most of the respondents saw themselves as active individuals who had been engaged in physical activities at key points in their lives. Some respondents had returned to physical activity after a long hiatus, while others had been continually involved in different activities. LaGazelle was an example of the former:

I have been running off and on ever since I was a kid and even though I was in track and field when I was younger, I did all my training on the trail, as opposed to on a track because I just loved being in the woods and feeling the wind and feeling close to nature....And since then, I have been running off and on, off and on and in 1994, I started running marathons and to train for the marathon....so I took up running again and I have been doing it ever since 1994.

LaGazelle had returned to running after many years. However, a number of the respondents had always been active in different kinds of physical activities throughout their lives. For example, Bear Scare explained:

I have always been involved with physical fitness. I am a physical education teacher at the high school and I find that physical fitness is very important to me. Running is something that I have taken up in my later twenties, just enjoy it. So the only trail running that I have done is for training, you know, cross country training with my kids at school and then of course we get a lot because of this race.

Bear Scare also used to be involved in provincial slo-pitch competitions, and her experience of being engaged in a variety of physical activities was representative of many of the respondents' lifestyles. While some had engaged in more traditional sporting activities like slo-pitch, ice hockey, triathlons, and race-walking, two respondents had spent a considerable amount of time engaged in outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking and kayaking:

... I have gone mountain biking and spent time in Kelowna and up through Interior BC and Golden. Guiding, I used to work on that hill and we head down and spent time on the valley camping, biking, we did a bit of climbing. (Python)

These statements suggest that the respondents saw themselves as active individuals because of their involvement in a range of physical activities. For this reason, the respondents were likely to identify strongly with certain places and settings. The respondents were likely to have often been in places such as hockey arenas, swimming pools, and natural settings (e.g., urban parks, valley and mountain trails). However, most of the respondents' physical activities took place in outdoor settings.

By engaging in activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, triathlons, slo-pitch, cross-country running, mountain biking and marathon running, the respondents demonstrated a preference for the outdoors. For example, LaGazelle commented:

I just find that I really enjoy myself outside. A lot of people talk about time and the kind of equipment you are wearing and the kinds of shoes that you have, and they are into the technical parts of it, and the competitive parts of it.... for me, it really is something that I enjoy being outside, I enjoy running, I enjoy feeling my body responding to the exercise and also the feeling you get after a run. I really enjoy it.

LaGazelle's preference for being outside, reflects the kinds of environments where she enjoys spending her recreational time, as did the other activities mentioned by a few of the other respondents. In addition, activities such as hiking, mountain biking and cross-country skiing are often done in small-groups, suggesting that the respondents were comfortable in social environments. While some respondents expressed their preference to have people around them at appropriate times and on appropriate occasions, all the respondents were generally friendly people who enjoyed chatting with strangers and spending time with friends. For example, in relating his experiences of participating in races during the last 26 years, Cheetah cites one reason why he remembers each race vividly:

Why do I remember them? Because of the people I meet in and around them, really. Like I have made some terrific friends through them and I do not think that if I [had not] made the friends that I have made that I would probably remember them quite easily....

While Cheetah cited social reasons for his vivid re-collection of racing, Cedar indicated that running enabled her to spend time with her friends. Although Cedar also ran alone on the trails, she still tried to fit in 'social' time to help to reduce her fear of bears:

My friends would say I know every trail in Calgary and I pretty well do. There are ones that people do not know about and those are the single track and in the mountains, I like to run on the hiking trails in the mountains. But I am scared of bears. Sometimes, when people like my friends are hiking, I would run and let them hike and just keep going between them back and forth.

The respondents' view of themselves as active individuals suggests the kind of spaces they feel comfortable in. A particular identity tends to allow a person to 'feel at ease' or 'at home' when they are immersed within the environment or space that such an identity is associated with. All the respondents enjoyed being active in the recreational aspects of their lives and also welcomed the social stimulus associated with these activities. Thus, they demonstrated their ease in outdoor environments and settings that facilitated socialization.

4.2.2 Runners (trail, road and/or others) and adventure racers.

While most of the respondents were involved in other types of sporting activities besides running, they generally saw themselves as 'runners'. No respondent called himself or herself a 'jogger'. Differentiated from a 'jogger' by the length and intensity of one's training time, a 'runner' is defined as an individual who runs at a faster pace, engages in the activity more often, and commits to longer distances than is typical of a 'jogger' (Smith, 2000). Accordingly, a runner is likely to run more regularly, go further distances, and run faster than what fitness and health would demand. Despite these differences, the runners interviewed in this study were unlikely to be placed in the category, of 'elite' runners. Although Cheetah's experiences were closest to being in the elite category, he still identified himself as a 'runner' and no more. During the interview, most respondents considered themselves to be 'runners', regardless of their previous achievements. Identifying himself as a 'runner', Cheetah emphasized how he related running to his life outside of running:

I have been a runner for 26...and a half years. I do it I guess part to prove that I can. The other reason I do it is I really do not know any other way to be. I have been running so long now that for me, it has become a natural part of my life.

Here, Cheetah revealed the extent to which his self-perception as a runner was intricately tied to his self-perception as a person. The former had become so much a part of him that his attitudes toward racing was probably integrated into his general values. Similarly, Python commented, "You know, like some people golf, some people read, some people walk, I think we all have it in us, for me, running just clicks with who I am and what I like to do." Speaking of the kinds of races that he enjoyed taking part in, Python stressed that running was his 'release' in life. While running was obviously very important to Cheetah and Python, it was even more essential to one other respondent, who thought of it as being as necessary as breathing and eating:

I still have to de-fragment and that is what I do. That is what my running is. It has kept me sane, I think, I need it. Breathing, food, shelter, running is a need. I need to run. (Karakonte)

As well as explaining what running meant to them, many of the respondents went on to describe themselves with a variety of names, when asked how they saw themselves as runners. Tigger, said that she wanted to be 'labelled' as a 'trail runner' and also as an 'ultra-distance runner':

So I would definitely say I am a trail runner. But I would like to start thinking of myself as an ultra-distance runner as well. That is going to run long distances at the same speed as I can run short.

Although she had taken part in a variety of other runs in both built and natural environments, Tigger still wanted to be known as a 'trail runner', as opposed to being called a 'runner'. Although a minority of respondents described themselves as 'long-distance runners' and 'ultra runners', they seemed to strongly prefer being 'labelled' as

trail runners, or runners who preferred to run in a natural environment, as opposed to road running. When asked whether he would chose a trail or road race to run in, Old Smokey replied, "I would choose the trail...because I love being out in nature. I have done a lot of hiking and quite a few other things and had other great experiences." This preference for natural settings was emphasized further when some respondents attributed their preference for running in nature to their distaste for living in big cities (e.g., Edmonton).

In describing her preference to run in natural environments, Violet also mentioned her dislike of living in big cities. Considering herself a person who enjoyed small-town living and being 'close' to nature and away from crowds, Violet remarked:

Yes, country is gorgeous. Countryside is beautiful. I like trees, mountains, I like all that kind of stuff, I do not like wide open parking lots in Edmonton, [and] I just do not like Edmonton, big city living at all. I like it out. We are on an acreage and I like that because it is just quiet.

Two other respondents who also lived in small-town Alberta expressed similar sentiments. By identifying themselves as 'country folks,' all three respondents suggested that they preferred natural areas. As the literature suggests, humans in foreign environments usually search for characteristics that are similar to those in their home environments (Marcus, 1992). Accordingly, if one is able to find the 'feel' of home in a particular space, one will be likely to identify or associate with that particular space easily and intimately. Based on the assumption that 'home' is a space where people feel most secure and at ease, such associations are not surprising. Linking their preference to run in natural spaces to their living spaces, and being 'country folks,' the three respondents revealed the important role that identity plays in a person's relations to spaces. Of the respondents who had identified themselves as 'runners', and later on, as

'trail,' 'long,' or 'ultra-runners,' only a minority saw themselves as 'Death Runners' even after participating in the 2002 CDR.

Karakonte was one of the small minority who indicated a willingness to be identified with the term 'Death Racer' after the race. In relating to the way he saw himself, Karakonte felt justified in calling himself a 'Death Racer' because of his participation in the race and also because of his 'links' with his fellow competitors:

Taking part in something that is a link with everybody, when I finished the race, even though I was incomplete, I went to the campsite washroom and there was another guy hobbling around and I said, "Soloist, right?" You know, we had a bond. We could talk about the roughness. Wes, the guy that I work with, we have a bond. You know, all Death Racers. I used to feel really funny about why they call Death Race, it is a dumb name. Why do you not call it the Grande Cache Race? You call it the Death Race so that you can get people from all over the world though. But now, I do not have a problem calling it the Death Race because it is, you know, I identify with it more.

Although Karakonte had much less experience with the Death Run than most other respondents, he still identified strongly with being a Death Racer. In all, only three respondents explicitly indicated their strong identification with being a Death Racer. The rest of the respondents merely acknowledged that their participation in the Death Race would contribute to their experiences and explained that to identify themselves as 'Death Racers' would be an exaggeration. For example, when asked if she saw herself as a 'Death Racer', Jo, the first 16- year old to complete this race, replied, "Oh no! Like I would say I am stubborn and determined before I would say I was a Death Racer. No, that is not that important to me." Given that this achievement was a 'first' for her, it can be assumed that it would have been significant for Jo. However, she viewed her persistence and determination as very much a part of who she was, thus identifying more strongly with these qualities, rather than with the particular event she had completed.

Ultimately, the respondents' self-perceptions of themselves as trail runners, long-distance runners, Death Racers or even runners who preferred to run in natural areas, provide much insight into the sort of spaces they likely prefer. For example, Tigger, as a self-professed trail runner, probably identified strongly with natural areas simply because they are where trails are often found and where many other like-minded runners are most likely to gather. Nevertheless, given that people have different identities and self-perceptions, the spaces that they are likely to have an affinity for will also vary. By perceiving themselves as 'runners', the respondents indicated their preferences to be outside, as opposed to indoors, and in many instances, to be in natural areas, when they were engaged in running. In addition, the nonchalance demonstrated by the first 16-year-old finisher of the 2002 CDR also suggests that not all individuals may define 'significant' moments in their lives similarly. Therefore, while outsiders may see the completion of a tough mid-length adventure race as a major achievement, the participants who engage in the activity may think otherwise. Instead, their engagement in the activity may serve only as a natural extension of their identity; by perceiving themselves to be stubborn and determined, they also have a tendency to take up activities that gives them opportunities to challenge themselves.

4.2.3 Seekers of personal challenges.

The interviews revealed the participants' key motivations for participating in the 2002 CDR. As a result, one of the respondents' distinctive characteristics was also revealed: their desire to challenge themselves continuously with new experiences and situations that would push them to the edge. Although the public generally believes that

many participants in adventure races and modern-day extreme sports have a maniacal desire to experience pain (Le Breton, 2000), the respondents' replies certainly did not support this perception. Participating in a race like the Death Run was apparently one way for the respondents to challenge themselves. Whether they desired the experience of stepping outside of their comfort zones, or wanted to find out what they were made of, the respondents all revealed their desire to push both their physical and mental stamina to the edge.

The 2002 CDR was the first race that Bear Scare had participated in. She explained why she and her husband, Pat, wanted to take on such an enormous challenge:

We just wanted to step outside of the box. Both of us. Like I really find with Pat we love to train together. We have already begun in weight training, but we stay within our comfort zones, and I really want to step outside the box. Do something that was just an amazing goal and to have Pat step outside of the box too was very exciting for me.

By participating in the Death Race, Bear Scare was able to satisfy her need to explore and seek risks within a socially acceptable activity. Although Bear Scare may also have used the challenges presented in the CDR as a way to strengthen her spousal relationship, her main reason for taking part in the Death Race was not much different from that of many of the other respondents. For example, LaGazelle chose to challenge herself because of the thrill she obtained from confirming her ability to handle unexpected situations and being able to maintain her reputation as a 'tough' lady:

I really feel like I have got to take myself to the very, very edge physically and mentally to prove that I am tough—to myself and not to anyone else. But just to know that. There never seems to be any way of satisfying my need to feel that I [have] got to be able to handle the most I can and then a little bit more. It is always trying, not feeling, that you are good enough that you have always got to try and be better, faster, tougher and this race brings all of that out. You feel as if you are really pushing yourself as far as you possibly can.

Respondents sharing LaGazelle's views also revealed the satisfaction they felt after having accomplished the 'harder things in life.' Achieving something that others deem to be nearly impossible and pushing oneself to the edge gave respondents an almost indescribable feeling of satisfaction. Cheetah explained:

There is something about... starting any task that most people do not ever attempt and then seeing it through to its completion.... I have done it with school, got a degree, was here working on one and every time you finish something that is just a completely, massive daunting task, finishing it is something that I relish and something that because of running, I get that feeling every time I take on something like this. I go out run a 10 kilometre, no big deal, I could not tell one 10 kilometre from one to the next, but anything that you push yourself to the edge, you find your limits, you find out what you are made of and every time you think that you found that, there nothing left, you find that there is still a little bit more in your gas tank.

Although the above quotation suggests that the participants wanted to challenge themselves in order to gain either thrills or personal satisfaction, some like Karakonte, really felt a need to prove their ability to other people, as well as to themselves.

I want to do it, I ...just because it is so hard, I can say I did it. I did the combat challenge, I did the... I am still trying to convince my mum that I am worthwhile. I think that is part of the drive for me, I am not going to win but it is just myself, it is just that ghost I have. The ghost that you are not going to accomplish anything more than your Uncle Gordon. It is an old issue I know, but it is still the accomplishment of me saying "I did it!" (Karakonte)

In setting difficult goals for himself, Karakonte felt he had to try to outdo the achievements of his uncle and prove to his mother that he was just as worthy, if not more, of praise. Finally, Moose Bait highlights another possible motivation for challenging himself:

Actually I am looking forward to trying one [an ultra-marathon in the desert]. There is one in Death Valley, California, called Bad Water and it is supposed to be just downright nasty and I will definitely like to try that in a couple years. 100 miles, you start below sea level and you end up on Mt Whitney which is...oh I cannot remember how high up...I cannot remember the distance but everybody just to toot toot toot toot toot <gestures moving along>...I mean it is really just a

personal challenge. If it is there, same like climbing Mt Everest, I think I used that analogy before, but why do people climb Mt Everest, because it is THERE!!!
<laughter>

Guided by the idea that we must try to experience the 'tougher' things at least once in our lives, Moose Bait set personal challenges for himself because he believed that such challenges exist for people to put themselves to the test.

By revealing their self-perceptions as tough people earnestly seeking their next personal challenge, the respondents also provided an insight into their rationale for deciding what races to take part in. The respondents were most likely to participate in races held in spaces that catered to their need to push their physical and mental strength to the edge. In order to live up to their identity as 'hardcore' runners, the respondents were highly likely to have an affinity with remote natural areas of varied terrain, unpredictable weather, and offering near-impossible challenges, simply because these spaces provided them with opportunities to push themselves to the limit.

This section has provided an insight into the self-perceptions of the 11 respondents. Their self-perceptions as active individuals, trail runners, and individuals who enjoyed seeking challenges have also suggested the sort of environments that had the strongest appeal for them. As active individuals, they preferred to spend their recreational time in the outdoors (whether in a built or natural environment). As trail runners, most of the respondents preferred to run in natural areas on the backtracks, as opposed to running on roads. As seekers of personal challenge, the respondents preferred races held in harsh settings with varied terrains, extreme weather conditions, and unexpected challenges. While the identities of the respondents have provided some

insight into the kind of spaces they were comfortable in, knowing their motivations for engaging in racing may also aid in understanding their needs, and eventually, their goals.

4.3 Motivations for Participation

Conceptualised as the 'thing' that "impels people to action and gives direction to that action once it is aroused or activated" (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997, p.188), motivation is also sometimes known in leisure theory as needs. Acknowledging that actions cannot be taken without an impetus, motivation is frequently described as the reason why a particular action has to be undertaken, because in order to satisfy a need, a behaviour or activity has to take place. Thus, gaining an understanding of the respondents' motivations may also provide an insight into some of the needs that had to be satisfied through participating in the 2002 CDR.

In the previous section, the insights gained into the self-perceptions of the respondents indicated some of the needs that they may have had. These included the need for constant personal challenges, contact with nature, and being physically active. The following section provides a clear picture of these needs and explains why the respondents believed that running and participating in the 2002 CDR would help them to satisfy these needs. As place attachment literature has suggested, gaining an understanding of the needs of individuals can sometimes provide insights into why they prefer one space over another. While the respondents' reasons for participating in recreational running and in the 2002 CDR overlapped in many ways, some differences occurred in terms of competition. The respondents' motivations for participating will,

therefore, be discussed in two sections: their reasons for trail running and their reasons for participating in the 2002 CDR.

4.3.1 Reasons for trail running.

When asked to explain their motivations for running and in particular, trail running, the respondents gave many reasons, which contributed to the existing information on how the respondents related to space. They were asked whether the functional aspect of a particular place was most appealing for them, or whether the places that they returned to held a special meaning for them? While some of the reasons were rather unconventional, most of them were more common.

Many respondents considered running, a mobile activity that needed little equipment, to be an easy way of having fun, keeping fit, meeting people (both old and new), and maintaining health. On several occasions, the respondents referred to running as a de-stressor, as a way to maintain the respondents' 'sanity' after a bad day at work, at home, or just a rough day in general.

Some days I will run, two days I do not....but no, for me it is...my wife could tell you, that if I come home and I am mad at the world, like I get angry and just physical, she will hand me my runners, and I will go and even 30 minutes, I will come back and the world is just a better place. For me, that is what it is about. It is my Zen or my karma, it is my day. Nobody can bug me, you know, you feel that.
(Python)

Python's comment suggested that for him, running was a way to escape from the stresses of everyday living, to forget about the 'bad' things and, instead, focus on the better things in life. Many other respondents expressed a similar idea. For them, running was also a way to escape from the stresses of everyday life and seek a balance in their lives. For these respondents, running had health-maintenance benefits. Beyond escapism, running,

in a few instances, was also used as a way to maintain or improve one's physical fitness (e.g., weight control). As well, the respondents also mentioned that running helped them to maintain their mental health. The feeling after a run was, according to some, a good booster for their self-esteem:

I enjoy the feeling of my body responding to the exercise and also the feeling you get after a run, I really enjoy it. It is the only time that I feel absolutely completely at peace is after a run. Where there is just absolutely nothing that can interfere with the glow and the enjoyment and the afterglow of a good run. There is just nothing like it. (LaGazelle)

LaGazelle emphasized the mental aspects of running and the idea that her feeling afterwards, satisfied her need to feel good about herself.

The respondents had some different reasons for trail running. When asked to explain the difference between road running and trail running, Old Smokey expressed his delight in running in natural areas:

I think there is a great difference. I think that closer to nature, it is a special feeling, it is a good feeling to run in a trail, in a forest, along a river valley or whatever, as opposed to running down 109th street here <laughter>. You know, for me, there is quite a big difference.

Old Smokey liked trail running because it connected him to nature and was also a way for him to be in the kind of places he really enjoyed. Other respondents who were also avid hikers and lovers of nature echoed Old Smokey's sentiments. Beyond seeking a 'connection' with the natural environment the respondents also considered trail running to be way to see and experience new places, around the globe and in the areas outside of their home regions. Using trail running as a vacation focus, Cedar commented, "I think that trail running is just a way to see parts of the world that you would not normally see. To get off the beaten path and just going and getting to know a new adventure." To Cedar, trail running was a means of 'exploring' and looking into places where she might

not otherwise have gone. The idea of getting off the beaten path suggests some aspect of novelty in Cedar's motivation for trail running.

In some instances, this idea of seeing and experiencing something new was also important for those respondents who ran on similar trails all the time. Unlike running on the same stretch of road over and over again, where the landscape is likely to remain relatively uniform, trail running offers runners a different sight on every run. The effects of sleet, snow, rain, and heat and the presence of animals can dramatically change a trail's conditions. Some of the respondents described this 'newness' as something that they were usually able to take delight in during a trail run. Having run the Death Run for three consecutive years, Moose Bait shared his thoughts on how 'new' the same trail could still be for him:

It is long enough and challenging enough, there is always something new to see. Like this year with the snow, it was a lot different than last year, with the wind and the year before with heat. Of course the weather changes the course and the course itself changes. Like Leg 3, there is a portion just before the coal road where I am going along and like okay, I should be going up here but all of a sudden there is a big arrow turning left and I am like "Huh? I do not even remember this" Turn and sure enough there is this clear cutting where they have chopped all these logs, and you had to run through trees that were like 'yeh' wide <gestures with a hand the size> Which was a pain in the butt...Every year the course changes because it has to deal with the environment and something could happen and I am not too sure what happened with that but it could have been safety. Somebody had said that the river was flooding a couple weeks before in that area so they get a little bit of a landslide, especially on the back of Hamel—where it is all switchbacks and you will run and say "Hey I do not remember running this way" and that is Mother Nature.

Attributing the changes in a familiar trail to the influences of Mother Nature, Moose Bait expressed his desire for unexpected challenges. To him, the idea of not being able to predict the exact conditions of the running route provided unexpected challenges during his run. This gave him not only a form of competition but also the challenge to adapt

quickly to new trail conditions. Furthermore, the trail's novel conditions also provided a freshness during his run, as opposed to the same old 'boring' trail. This sense of novelty was also identified by Tigger as a key motivator to go trail running.

I get terribly bored training on the road. Yeah running on the same thing is difficult for me so I am ready to go run the trail for these things...I enjoy the birds around, just the noises. The different feel under my feet. You know, looks different if there is snow on the ground, white yukky stuff on the tree, whatever. So then I really enjoy and take in a lot of what is around me when I am running and that I...So I feel for more motivated, it is easier for me to go for a long trail run than to run on the road. And even running in the river valley in someway is nice because you are close to the river, but I get bored on the paths. I like to run on the bike tracks, you know the little tracks that are off from there, because it is not only a feeling like I am more in it, but a little bit more challenged about it. You cannot just put your feet down because on the path, you close your eyes and your run virtually.

In describing her yearning for variety, Tigger expressed her difficulty with running on the pavement, where one is able to close one's eyes and still run. Once again, the unpredictability of the trails and the possibility of new experiences added some value and excitement to a run. Because of varied terrain and situations where the sighting of a rare bird, animal or even a rare plant can add to the experience, trail running satisfied the respondents' need for novelty and unpredictability. The inability to predict what would happen on the same trail from one day to another (e.g., due to changes in weather) was something that was attractive to most of the respondents. The 'newness' and the surprises that awaited them on a trail run tended to be a motivating factor for many of them. This motivation is perhaps what drove many of the respondents to call themselves 'adventurers' and 'explorers' seeking out new places by running within Mother Nature's creation.

A prominent reason that emerged for trail running was the respondents' enjoyment of the beauty of nature, which often gave them a welcome distraction. For

example, Jo loved being able to compete in a natural environment that helped take her mind off her problems: "I have been in trail running, like cross country for high school and junior high. I really like trail running, I like the scenery, I get to take my mind off about things." For some respondents, however, the idea of being able to get away from it all, where they could satisfy their need for solitude, and just focus on the beauty of Mother Nature was most important:

It is just the trails are so beautiful...Every time we go out there and we see deer, we see beautiful white tailed deer, it is quiet, the surroundings are just...it is nature, it is just...quiet, rolling, beautiful rolling hills and I love that atmosphere. Just away, no cars, no nothing, it is just very spiritual. Very, very nice. You can lose yourself out there. (Bear Scare)

Bear Scare and her husband's trail running at a lake area near their hometown in rural Alberta satisfied not only her need for solitude, but also for spirituality. Thus, trail running was also considered a spiritual experience for her. Similarly, Cedar felt that she was connecting with God during her run on the trails:

I love to do it because you get off on your own, in your own mind, in your own environment. Just enjoying what God has created, definitely, I like to go running in the trails because I find that I have better quiet time to pray and to solve the problems of the world <laughter> and just the peacefulness and the adventure of it all would probably be it.

Using her running as a time to pray, meditate and reflect on the teachings of Christ, Cedar derived her spiritual experience from her connection with a 'greater force' in nature. Likewise, Python mentioned the sense of calm he feels when he is within a natural setting:

Spiritually, I believe in it. I believe that Nature was here primarily before. It was God, Karma, and everything else, that is it...Getting up and seeing the Sun, appreciating the rain when it comes, you now, seeing Nature for what it is, you know? Two birds or a butterfly flying around, that is what it is about. It is right there. You do not have to pay for it, you do not have to be do anything, it is right there...It is a part of me, I like it.

In describing his deep respect for nature and the appreciation of its beauty, Python expresses his deep-felt belief of being a part of the larger natural system. Although he did not refer to a particular god, Python's statement acknowledged the idea of nature being the 'greater force.' In general, the respondents who perceived their running in nature as a spiritual experience ran trails to fulfill their need for connectedness and belonging.

In summary, the key motivations for trail running included maintaining physical and mental health, experiencing novel environments, re-establishing their connectedness to nature, and renewing their faith in a spiritual force in nature. While these reasons were similar to those for participating in the 2002 CDR, the respondents expressed some other additional reasons for taking part in such a 'notorious' race.

4.3.2 Reasons for participating in the 2002 Canadian Death Run (CDR).

The element of competition gave many of the respondents an additional reason for participating in the 2002 CDR. Besides wanting to 'treat' themselves to a good challenge by putting their bodies and minds to what they thought was the 'ultimate' test of endurance, to meet new friends and to get re-acquainted with old ones, and to see a new place or experience a familiar one differently, some of the respondents also had more specific goals they wanted to achieve by participating in the 2002 CDR. For example, the two respondents who were attempting the Death Run for a third consecutive time expressed their desire to improve their times of the previous year. Moose Bait wanted to better his previous time of 19 hours and 29 minutes:

Keep the streak alive. Only seven of us have done both years and that will probably drop a few more this year. I want to beat my time 2000—20:02, 2001—19:29, 2002—? Strictly racing with myself and thrive with the challenge.

By wanting to compete with his own previous performance, Moose Bait had set a challenge for himself that was more specific than just wanting to finish the race. As well, Python also wanted to race against his own previous time, and other respondents wanted to better their times in previous races with a similar distance to that of the 2002 CDR. Only Cheetah, participating in this race for the first time, mentioned that he wanted to win the race. For some respondents, another specific goal for taking part in the 2002 CDR was to use this race to prepare them for longer runs (e.g., 100-mile races). For example, LaGazelle explained, "I enjoy long distance running. I would like to finish this 70 miles, and then go on to do a 100 mile non-stop run."

The interviews and pre-race questionnaires also indicated that some respondents were racing for a particular individual, a group, or an affiliation of people. Old Smokey and Karakonte, both fathers to two children, cited them as a reason for participating in the 2002 CDR. Old Smokey, in reflecting after the race, revealed that he had entered it to be an example to his children:

One other thing that I had in my goal was to be a good example for my children as well. I think it is very important to be physically active and maybe they will not be runners but I hope that sometime in their life, always in their life that they will be physically active and I want to be a good example in that way. And I also, I always try to get them to appreciate the wilderness and nature in general and to experience it in many different ways. That was another part of the race. It is part of the reason why I did it.

Old Smokey was trying to encourage his children to keep physically active throughout their lives, to encourage them to seeking new experiences, and to discover their connectedness with nature. In contrast, Karakonte explained that one of his reasons for running the race was to make his family proud of him as an achiever: "To see that I could

do it. I have talked to so many people, my wife has told the world." Python, however, had the most unusual reason for participating in the 2002 CDR:

I am always encouraged, like I am always excited to see where my time slot is, to see some of the teams out there, like the people who are out there just doing a leg and that, and like they trained for it. To them...Just to see the look on their face when they are going to finish that leg, it is really cool. Just to see other people getting inspired about I guess, something that I hold true to my heart, that is just cool to see.

Speaking of his desire to see people derive the same benefits from an activity that he found so satisfying, Python conveyed his sense of sharing and belongingness. At the same time, Python also conveyed a sense of novelty, for he considered it 'cool' to experience new groups of people and find out about their stories. Thus, while some respondents were trying to inspire those around them by taking part in the 2002 CDR others entered it to be inspired by their fellow competitors.

The above discussion has shown that all the respondents were motivated somewhat differently to take part in the 2002 CDR. Although the respondents' were seeking competition (or challenge), fun, 'maintenance of health', and camaraderie when they chose to participate in the Death Run, some of them also had additional reasons for participating. The respondents participated in trail running to maintain their health, to connect themselves to nature, to experience new things/settings, or to satisfy their need for solitude and contemplation. When the element of competition was added into the whole equation, other motivations such as the desire to satisfy their egos (through proving their physical prowess), to inspire family members, and to have others inspire them were identified.

Many of these latter motivations were very much in line with those of individuals who engage in adventure-sports tourism. As the literature suggests, adventure-sports

tourists are usually driven by their need for novel experiences, acquisition and maintenance of skills, and socialization during their engagement in activities involving a fair amount of risks, play, personal competence, competition and rules (Ewert & Shultis, 1997; Hall, 1992; Hinch & Higham, 2001; Morgan, Moore & Mansell, 1997; Priest & Ballie, 1987). The respondents' desire for new experiences, to achieve better times, and to meet new people and re-acquaint with friends, are similar to the motivations of adventure-sports tourists. The insight gained into the needs that the respondents considered to be most important for participating in trail running and racing has suggested the kinds of spaces that might satisfy these specific needs and that the respondent's might have preferred or looked for when they signed up for a race.

4.4 Chapter Summary

Perceiving themselves as active individuals, trail runners and seekers of personal challenges, the respondents indicated their affinity for particular spaces. By enjoying being physically active in the outdoors, as opposed to the indoors, and by running on trails, as opposed to on roads, the respondents indicated their preference for being in outdoor environments and/or within natural areas. Thus, if a race were going to be held in a natural environment, then the respondents would have likely been able to identify with that area more easily than with built environments. Furthermore, the respondents' perception of themselves as people seeking personal challenges also corresponds well with natural environments, where there are natural challenges, as opposed to man-made challenges.

Along with their self-perceptions, the respondents' motivations for running and taking part in the 2002 CDR also emerged from both the pre-and post-race questionnaires. The respondents all found satisfaction through the activity of trail running. Trail running satisfied their needs for fun, personal challenges, friendships, escape, new experiences, a connection to nature, solitude, contemplation, improving/maintaining their physical and mental health, and acquiring new skills. Their answers offered some insights into their preferences for particular spaces. Featuring varied terrain, dynamic settings away from the chaos of life, and the desire to connect with the natural world, the respondents were attracted by outdoor spaces. For example, with no set terrain, spaces in the wilderness are subjected to erosion, wash-outs, and the natural regeneration of flora. Because of the constant changes, such spaces also provide dynamic settings where the climate patterns and the weather can cause the spaces to look different each day. Located away from the chaos of daily life, these spaces are also likely to provide opportunities to re-connect with nature, to experience solitude, and to engage in contemplation. Thus, races held in natural spaces with varied terrain, landscapes and features were more likely to satisfy the respondents' needs, than races held in built environments.

Finally, Chapter IV has offered a glimpse into the self-perceptions of the respondents, and their specific motivations for running and participating in the 2002 CDR. While the chapter has shown how these motivations were similar to those of adventure-sports tourists, it has also indicated the respondents' preferences for particular spaces that they could identify with and feel comfortable in. Therefore, while the findings suggest that the respondents were likely to have a strong affinity for natural

environments, as a result of their self-perceptions, any attachment that would form to the environment by participating in the race still depended on the Death Race experience. Unless this experience was going to be a fulfilling (positive) one, it can be argued that the formation of place attachment, after the race, may not have been possible. It can be argued further that even if the respondents had their needs met, the level of attachment formed would still vary at different levels.

Chapter V

Lived Experiences of The 2002 Canadian Death Run and Control

Yet Conroy and 55 other solo runners of the 100 who started endured the bone-numbing cold overnight temperatures, the nearly three feet of snow they had to cross on the peaks, the ankle-deep puddles and swamps and their own mental doubts to complete the course in less than 24 hours. (Korobanik, 2002, D1)

5.1 Introduction

The lived experience of the Death Run 2002 was addressed in the post-race interviews. As the literature suggests, the outdoor recreation experience can be conceptualised in five different phases: anticipation, travel-to, on-site experience, travel-back and recollection (Clawson & Knestch, 1966). In this chapter, however, a detailed description of the Death Run experience is presented in three phases: the anticipation, on-site experiences and recollection. This was because in the interviews, the respondents were not asked explicitly to relate their experiences according to the five different phases. In their answers, the respondents revealed more about the first, third and fifth phases of their experiences than about the second and fourth phases.

In addition, this chapter also includes a section on the types of control mechanisms exercised by the respondents throughout the duration of the race. As the literature has suggested, an understanding of the respondents' preferred means of control throughout the race provides insights into how the respondents retained their positive self-identity when absolute control was absent.

5.2 The 2002 Canadian Death Run (CDR)

Of the 11 respondents, only seven of them managed to complete the run within the 24-hour time limit. Old Smokey completed the run in the closing moments¹⁷ of the race. The majority of the respondents who dropped out of the race did so because of injuries sustained or re-aggravated during the course of the race. Bear Scare was the only respondent who dropped out of the race because of the serious dehydration suffered by her running partner. The Death Run had indeed showed itself deserving of the respect that its organizers demand from all who challenge it.

5.2.1 Anticipation.

Promoted as the toughest race of its kind in Canada, the Death Run must be given credit for the apprehension it caused in some of those who decide to take it on. Claiming that those who choose to partake in the challenge must possess the curiosity of a cat, the constitution of an ox and the spirit of adventure, the promotional literature on the race focuses on the spectre of challenges (Canadian Death Race, 2002). It promised a race route fraught with pain, hardship and suffering. For this reason, the pre-race anticipation period can be described as a time of focus, anxiety and some apprehension for the respondents.

The element of focus surfaced during the respondents' physical preparations for the race. In anticipation of the difficult terrain and weather extremes, all the respondents committed many hours to training. While some respondents tried to maintain a schedule of rigorous training, requiring them to train at least five days a week, one respondent even trained at night:

¹⁷ Old Smokey reached the finish line after 23 hours and 50 minutes.

I will go on a run in the night time at around 10 o'clock and come back at 3 in the morning in the winter time, it is really cold out and so I will put up my bag, get it set up and I will go out for a run ... (Karakonte)

Attempting to squeeze in whatever training time he could get, Karakonte clearly had to accommodate his training schedules to his working schedule. Karakonte's night training was not typical of the training of the other respondents, but their training schedules were rigorous and required considerable dedication:

Four times a week, you ran four times a week, with a long run every week, and I weight train three times a week....I mean we started at 8 miles and marked ourselves up to 18 miles for a long run for the one day, and the other days were 4-6 miles, sometimes I had my mileage total per week, I think the most that I had was a 34-35 miles for one week and then weight training three times a week. (Violet)

Consumed by a regime of running and weight training in the weeks leading up to the run, Violet exemplified the kind of focus needed in order to train for the Death Run. A dental assistant and a mother to two daughters, Violet still found time to train. Most other respondents emphasized that they had to train a great deal to prepare for the race. The many hours dedicated to training definitely built up the respondents' performance expectations for the race. Moreover, some decided to take the preparation process one step further. In anticipation of the terrain and the race route, some of the respondents also signed up for the Death Run training camp to get an idea of what the route was like.

Over a weekend in June 2002, 4 of the respondents, who had never been to Grande Cache before drove to town to attend the training camp. Focusing mainly on running, hiking, and biking, this training camp was essentially an opportunity for the race participants to learn about selected portions of the Death Trail:

Anything that was level, we did on a bike just so we could see it and there is not too much that is level... That opened my eyes. So then we did some of the biking and then we do a four to six hour hike on Friday, we did Leg Two, then Friday

night we went out for a night run, that was optional , but we did it. It was 45 minutes at 11.30 pm at night so we were tired, I went to bed, woke up, did this night run, ... The next day we did another leg...we did Mt Hamel and to another part of the leg and on Sunday, we did another two parts of the two other legs. So we did the whole thing through the whole weekend. (Violet)

The training weekend was also considered to be a good opportunity to take in the natural environment. Conceived as a guided adventure race providing an opportunity to see what Grande Cache had to offer, the training camp was much more leisurely than the actual race and provided opportunities for taking photographs and making mental notes.

Describing her focus on race day, Bear Scare revealed the following:

...my focus on that day was more finishing, even though there were moments which I remember as being beautiful, like the snow on top of Flood, like that was beautiful, and Grande, very beautiful, but...the focus that day was just finishing, where everyone else packed their camera. Because that was the purpose of me going to the training camp... I wanted to absorb as much as I could, that beautiful countryside, and you knew you would have the time, which I did and I was glad I did so because I would have felt jibbed, I think, had I not done that, " Oh , now that I am in a beautiful countryside and all I am doing is focusing on racing." So that day was about finishing.

Bear Scare, added another objective to that of the training camp. Wanting to focus on attaining her goals on race day, Bear Scare felt that the training camp was not only a good time to learn the Death Trail, but also to experience the environments surrounding it more fully. Another respondent who had attended the previous training camps also echoed Bear Scare's sentiment. According to Moose Bait, training runs were the only times when he could really take a closer look at his surroundings:

...Grande Cache is more visually stimulating but I am not spending much time looking at the scenery, most of the time, I mean you do look and go like " Oooo...wow" but most of the time it is more like choo choo choo choo <gestures actions of moving along> you are going, going, going and you take a quick look. It is more on the training runs when you go up there for fun, so you are actually taking the time to look.

Besides enabling the participants to take in the settings of the place and become familiar with parts of the Death Trail, the training camp was also a time to gather tips for the run and plan a race strategy by talking to the race director.

I like going to training camp and kind of seeing, and I was told that that was a good idea for me to go and see what it would be like, and I am glad that I did but it was not really for the trails, it was for knowing what kind of packs I should be using and things other than the tips that he gave us and things. (Cedar)

Knowing what the race route was like and understanding the value of using certain pieces of equipment for the race, helped to build the anticipation leading up to the race.

Half of the respondents doubted that they could finish the race within the time limit and all understood that the race was going to be very challenging. For example, Cheetah wrote, "Ugly, tough, NOT for the weak of heart, mind, body and soul. Imagine if you will, running up and down the Telus building stairwell for 15 + hours." Obviously, Cheetah knew that the race route (which he had never seen) was a very tough one. However, as well as anticipating the challenge the trail was going to pose, many of the respondents were also looking forward to the scenery and the wildness around the race route, and said so in their pre-race questionnaire when asked how they would describe the trail to their friends. For example, LaGazelle stated, "I would describe it as a 70 mile run through untamed wilderness. Majestic mountains, clean air, clean water and dark forests." From LaGazelle's description, one can visualize the picturesque route that some respondents were looking forward to prior to the race.

When Moose Bait was asked how he would describe the course route to his friends, he highlighted his anticipation of the many emotions that he would experience during the race. A two time finisher of the Death Trail, Moose Bait described the upcoming run as an emotional roller coaster: "Like the first year of marriage, initially

total excitement, thrills, then dread, but happy again, lot of low points, lots of high points. Great course and if you finish it, you can call yourself a 'DEATH RACER.'" By using the analogy of newly-weds to describe the runners in the race, Moose Bait emphasized the emotional nature of the competition. Anxieties ran high for those taking on such a huge challenge for the first times in their lives, but many respondents who started the 2002 CDR with 'butterflies' in their stomachs eased into the run as it progressed and experienced moments of pain, satisfaction, joy and frustration as the race wore on.

5.2.2 On-site experience.

On August 3rd, 2002 at 8.a.m., the long awaited third annual Death Run began. The skies were cloudy, and the temperature was approximately 3 °C. Respondents felt thankful for the fact that it was not raining and hoped that it would remain that way for the rest of the day. For example, Bear Scare stated:

By Saturday morning, I was ready. I was like "Let's go!!!" and the fact that it was not raining that Saturday, that was a big mental booster for me. I just thought that was just great, this is great weather.

The respondents' general mood, at the starting line, was a one of anxiety, apprehension, and excitement. The anxiety and apprehension arose mainly from their uncertainty about their ability to complete the race. Old Smokey, although having done Leg Four on the relay route in the previous year, seemed to be consumed by such thoughts:

Well, if you recall, the weather was quite bad so the day building up to the race, I was quite concerned about the conditions that we would be running in. Also I was also a bit apprehensive about whether or not I could finish. So those were my thoughts starting out the race.

Uncertain about his ability to complete the race as he was an older individual, Old Smokey demonstrated the kind of anxieties and apprehension experienced by some other

respondents before the race started. Believing that she could complete the race, Tigger describes the kind of excitement that some respondents felt while waiting for the race to begin:

I think at that stage, I was feeling really confident in some ways because I know even when I am tired—have got a strong mental...I am in a good place mentally, a good placement, so that was in my mind once I started, I knew that however I was going to fare physically that I would be strong enough mentally. That was the part of the test that I would beat, I knew that I would be relying on mental strength towards the end of the race.

This section describes the Death Run 2002 as the 11 respondents experienced it. The disclosure of their sensations and feelings throughout the run revealed many commonalities but also many differences among the respondents, despite running on the same race route.

The remainder of this section will be split into five subsections, each describing a different leg of the 2002 CDR. Each subsection will begin with a brief introduction of the leg as described by the race organizers, and will be followed by a detailed presentation of the feelings and thoughts experienced by the respondents as they ran through the five legs.

5.2.2.1 Leg one: Downtown jaunt.

Leg one of the Death Run, the Downtown Jaunt, began in the centre of Grande Cache and proceeded onto trails after 6 km of pavement. Described by the respondents as a relatively 'flat and easy' 19 km stretch, with some unexpected hills and muddy sections, this leg was considered a rather relaxed and fun stage that helped the respondents to overcome their initial anxieties about the race. Many runners felt that they 'flew' through this leg.

Besides feelings of apprehension and confidence, the other sensations reported by the respondents were those of happiness, excitement and fun. Apparently much of this delight came from their relief that it was not raining, and that the trails were challenging but still comfortable enough for the respondents to handle. For example, Jo remarked, "I know that...the first leg, Leg One, I was happy. I like being in the trails and the trails were real small so [I] just kind of ran that and so yeah I was having fun." Here, Jo's happiness seemed to be derived from being 'fresh' into the race and from feeling comfortable with her running. In some instances, a sense of awe brought happiness to some of the respondents as well:

I was happy though, when I start off on race day because I felt like I was warm, and that was the key to me is to be warm. So I was happy, I had all my equipment and I had made the necessary preparations. I remember when I first got onto the trail, because I have never done a race like this, through the woods and in the mountains, and I remember thinking how absolutely beautiful. (LaGazelle)

Clearly, LaGazelle's sense of comfort, enjoyment, and novelty contributed to her happiness in Leg One.

Another possible contributing factor to this comfort level could have been derived from the 'carnival' atmosphere of Leg One. This atmosphere resulted from the crowds of people who had watched the flag-off (most of the town's residents and the participants' supporters) in their costumes and ghastly masks. At the Death Run 2002, the flag-off command "Death Runners, on your marks, get set, GO!!!" was drowned out by the cheers and screams from the supporters and the competitors, as well as by the cow-bells that the supporters and spectators were ringing (Personal Field Journal). The noise not only excited the spectators, but also some of the competitors themselves:

I think at the beginning, I was very, very excited. Leg One, very exciting, especially because Leg One is a short leg and after two hours and a few minutes,

you were back at the transition point. The crowds were cheering and it was very much an exciting time. (Bear Scare)

This carnival atmosphere, however, did not end after the flag-off. Many of the same people who had witnessed the start of the race also proceeded down to a deep mud bog towards the end of Leg One, to encourage all the participants to 'get wet,' 'get dirty,' and 'get going.' A huge bog, this muddy puddle stood out as a key feature of the race for many respondents. Although they could have avoided crossing the bog, all the respondents still chose to join in the fun and ran through the muddy puddle, not only soaking their shoes and themselves, but also providing entertainment for their enthusiastic spectators. Running through the mud bog was apparently the most 'fun' thing some of the respondents had ever done in a race! Cedar later explained:

Stage One, when they made us run through the mud, it was so exciting because hearing them ringing the bells and cheering, I could see why they were and just thought that it was everybody from the town had come out to watch us. And getting to where they were and seeing how they were making us run through this big mud hole, I was like, "WOW! That is why you are making all the noise!" And it was so exciting just to run through the muddle puddle and onto the next stage...yeah and I just had so much fun along the way...

A veteran of many foot races, Cedar was as excited by the mud bog as the other respondents were. The spectators' enthusiasm and support during Leg One definitely energized most of the respondents. This support was important, especially for solo runners, for all of them still had a long way to go. Violet summed up the respondents' general feelings about Leg One by commenting, "I remember in Leg One, it was really exciting. I was pumped and it went really well."

Characterized by the respondents' initial feelings of apprehension and anxiety and later by those of happiness and excitement, the first leg was the easiest stage in the Death Run because many of the solo runners were still relatively fresh and enthusiastic about

what was to come in the race. Fondly recollected as an enjoyable and fun time for many of the respondents, Leg One provided the respondents with the puddle at Washy Creek and beautiful scenery around the trails. However, their success in Leg One proved to be short-lived for some of the respondents, as problems started to arise in Leg Two.

5.2.2.2 Leg two: Flood and Grande mountain slugfest.

Described by the race organizers as the second hardest leg of the Death Trail, Leg Two was a definite highlight for the respondents. This leg is a 27 km long route with only 1 km of pavement (Canadian Death Race, 2002). The other 26 km consist of dirt trails, with rocky, mossy or swampy sections. With a net elevation gain of about 152.4 m, the total elevation change is over 1828.8 m. Leg Two includes two mountain ascents (Flood and Grande mountain) and a run through—'The Gauntlet' (or Slugfest)—the valley between the peaks of Flood and Grande that has treacherous footing and many ledges.

Indisputably, the best-remembered stretch of the whole race, 'The Gauntlet' was especially dangerous in the 2002 CDR because of the presence of snow, ice and, in addition, seismic lines. Many of the respondents had unpleasant memories of running through 'The Gauntlet' because of the slippery conditions on race day. This stretch of the run dominated most of the discussion about Leg Two:

Like I will not forget that. I will tell you right now that I have already forgotten how hilly the first 19 km was but it was not...nobody recounted the first 19 km, we all did the first 19 km but the part that everybody remembers, talk to anybody about Leg Two and it is going to be the slugfest and the Gauntlet in between leg two. (Cheetah)

Highlighting the parts of Leg Two that people most remembered, Cheetah went to great lengths to describe the steepness of 'The Gauntlet' as something that he would remember

for a long, long time. Besides providing the respondents with a definitive section to remember, Leg Two gave the respondents a host of feelings and sensations. It provided some respondents with moments of fear, pain and frustration, while providing others with excitement and fun.

Leg Two increased the comfort levels of some of the respondents. With much of their initial apprehension forgotten, these respondents gradually began to enjoy the run as it progressed. Bear Scare stated:

Leg Two, I remember feeling a bit apprehensive, still excited but a bit apprehensive because we did Leg Two at the training camp and I knew what it would involve and I knew it was pretty gruelling so I was a little afraid of how I would feel after Leg Two, but my husband and I stayed together and the whole time and really kept our thoughts very light and really joked around and kept the mood very light. I was really having a lot of fun in Leg Two and it was really muddy and falling and sliding and I was really enjoying the experience.

Having been through Leg Two before, Bear Scare found herself easing into the run, anticipating the toughness as well as trying to keep happy by sharing her feelings with her running partner.

Despite the sense of comfort that some of the respondents were gaining, many of the same respondents were also feeling apprehensive about the trail's conditions. For example, LaGazelle, started worrying about injuring herself badly as she ran through 'The Gauntlet,'

But I did not feel safe at times, going straight down in the mud. I was scared to death that I was going to break my ankle and I really was. And to me, that is not my big race. There are a lot of people who come to this race that train all year long for this race, but this race for me was just a training run.

Many of the respondents remembered having had similar fears during Leg Two, but only LaGazelle re-injured herself by falling and slipping, while Moose Bait and Karakonte struggled with their tightened hamstrings and locked knees:

Every ten feet, I am trying to stretch my hamstrings and when I try and work on my quads, I get a cramp in my calves, I get a cramp in my hamstring, and I had to straighten out because there were big knots going in there. And it was harder and harder and I try and go on my knees and it would hurt to go down. Or...I was trying to stretch and right from the start, thinking that if I went backwards and if I went sideways, maybe it would get better and it will feel good and I would be able to run. The pain would come right back. (Karakonte)

Having re-aggravated or sustained injuries during their run through 'The Gauntlet',

LaGazelle, Karakonte, and Moose Bait had to deal with severe pain from that point on.

Due to the route's isolation, immediate rescue or medical help was not available, so they had to, at least, make their way to the foot of Grande mountain before some type of help was possible. Situated in the valley bottom between the peaks of Flood and Grande, 'The Gauntlet' was not accessible to any form of transportation. Eventually, at the end of Leg Two, Karakonte had to drop out of the race because of the immense pain he was experiencing:

I just...so I hobbled...all the way up that...the road, because it was down the hill past Grande Cache, on leg two, you have to go up and up the hill...Yeah and I had to go up backwards, up that lot just through the road itself because I tried running and ...it was a little difficult down the hill and I had to go backwards down, my son brought me a big stick, so I was able to walk, I walked okay. ...I had to go across the finish line in leg two. I just had to do it. Even though I was not going to finish the race, I was going to get a DNF and all those kind of stuff, I had to finish leg two, even if I had to crawl on my hands and knees.

Having tightened his hamstring muscles, Karakonte apparently could not go downhill unless he walked backwards—an indication of the pain he had to endure throughout the second half of Leg Two. Even in his state of pain, Karakonte still desperately wanted to complete the race, so naturally, he was very frustrated.

Many of the other respondents also experienced frustration for different reasons.

For Tigger, her frustration arose when she briefly lost her orientation:

Just at one stage, we came up at the top of somewhere, like 2nd leg and we were not quite sure where to go, and I was with one or two other runners, not intentionally sticking with them but we were just together, we were not sure whether we had to head up a little bit further or come straight down. And it was nice to have a break but I did not enjoy the feeling of discomfort at thinking, "Oh, where do we go now?" and if [we should] head up instead ... how is it going to be punishing wise as well as just frustrating. And then someone came along who had done the race previously and said we head straight down, which made sense because there were more tracks going down.

Although the Death Trail was marked fairly well, runners sometimes still lost their way by following the wrong markers. (The Death Trail was marked by bright orange tape tied, hung or stuck onto tree trunks, branches or home-made signage along the race route.)

The above quotation also implied the frustrations experienced by racers when they were in groups, especially when they were lost and many opinions were being offered.

LaGazelle expressed a similar sort of frustration, which explained her preference for racing alone:

I was running alone most of the time. There was one point, I do not really like talking to people too much, like it is nice to strike up the occasional conversation but I am pretty much just focused right, and I find that sometimes when you get in conversation with people, it can take away my motivation. You know, like...there was one time when we stopped and there was a guy that stopped beside me and I had not been talking to him before that and he started saying, "Oh, we are not going to make the cut-off time, we are falling behind, we are falling behind." And I was like "What are you talking about? We have got a couple of hours off the cut-off times" ...And he was going, "I did this race last year and I know what I am talking about and..." And then it really freaked me out that I was falling behind so then I am racing out of my pace and I get to the next checkpoint and it said 1630, which he said was wrong. And I said, "what time is the cut-off time at this checkpoint?" and they said "1830" and I am thinking that I got all uptight and all strung out for nothing because of what this guy said and so I was really uptight about that and I think that kind of added to my getting, you know, worked up. Like I do not like being worked up during a race because I would lose my focus you know. So that kind of ticked me off! <laughter>

As well as believing that racing with others was not helpful, LaGazelle also felt that a large part of the experience of running such a race was the solitude gained from time spent alone.

Moose Bait encountered another source of frustration in the form of seismic equipment left in the middle of the running route. In effect, these equipment added one more obstacle for the participants to overcome:

Probably those darn seismic lines. Because I lashed out with my feet in them three times, so I caught my feet and it was one particular section which was probably one crew because most of it was on the right hand side and there is one section where the seismic equipment was right in the middle of the trail and it lasted through whatever period of time and then after that it went to the right... There had to be that one crew who put their equipment right in the middle, and I even asked a volunteer. "Do you have a knife?" because I even wanted to start cutting the wire. I got so frustrated that I was getting lashed out.

Evidently angry and frustrated from being caught in the seismic lines, Moose Bait was ready to cut up some of these wires, and he assured me that if he had found a knife at that point, he would have cut them without hesitation.

The respondents' comments revealed that Leg Two frustrated them for different reasons: losing one's way, being misinformed, failing to continue the race, and tripping over unexpected obstacles. However, some respondents still enjoyed either parts or all of Leg Two.

Some respondents experienced moments of enjoyment and even euphoria after reaching the two mountain summits or running through the Gauntlet. For example, Karakonte remarked:

Yeah, Flood Mountain? And you see the view of the whole town <in gasping whisper> and I felt on top of the world. I yelled, "YAHOO!" you know? "I made it!" You know, I was euphoric, I went like this <two hands punching in to the air> and I yelled out, "YAHOO! I MADE IT! I DID IT! I DID IT! I really did it!" I got here, you know?

That achievement was definitely a high point for Karakonte, as he was injured only a few metres further down from this mountain summit. Other respondents enjoyed the challenge of 'The Gauntlet,' a key obstacle for many of them. For Jo, 'The Gauntlet' was undeniably a lot of fun:

Yeah that would be the part I would talk about the most... A lot of people did not like it because it was all muddy and they were slipping but I liked it. I like the challenge of trying to get down. Like I do not like just straight running, I like challenging myself to like go around obstacles and stuff like that.

Cedar also enjoyed 'The Gauntlet,' imagining herself as Tarzan, swinging between trees.

Stage 2, on the slugfest, I love that! You were sliding down in muddy, and yet I was holding on to trees and vines on the sides and I was thinking I was Tarzan <laughter> and I was really loving that!

Ultimately, despite the many woes experienced during Leg Two, it was still, overall, a positive experience for most of the respondents. Clearly, Leg Two disappointed Karakonte, who had to drop out of the race. Leg Two could not have been too enjoyable for LaGazelle and Moose Bait because they had to press on, despite their injuries. Nevertheless, most respondents reacted positively to Leg Two. While some enjoyed the challenge of running on a race-course strewn with obstacles, Python took time to enjoy the scenery, trying to absorb what was around him:

Oh yeah! I stopped on top of...with the exception of stopping at Mt Hamel, like I went up and I stopped, took pictures and sat. You know, I was not worried if I wanted to eat a granola bar, I will stop, take a look around just appreciating it. You know it is cool. I cannot explain it, that is just it. Just half the people at the race are not doing that....What is twenty minutes? I mean I was not doing this with my watch <gesturing looking back and forth at the watch>. I left my watch and get into a meditation, ask my friends what time it was and go on from there.

Attaining peace with himself and whatever was around him, Python, unlike many of the other respondents, was seemingly oblivious to the trail conditions. Although he was

intent on completing the race within the 24-hour limit, Python also wanted to fulfill his other needs during the run, such as his need to enjoy nature and solitude. Although he had entered the race to try to better his time from the previous year, Python also had other goals for participating in such a race—to enjoy nature and be awed by its beauty. In this sense, Python was an exception.

5.2.2.3 Leg three: Old mine road “City Slicker Valley.”

According to the organizers, Leg Three is the easiest section of the Death Run (Canadian Death Race, 2002). Leg Three consists of a run along the Smokey River Valley bottom, the lowest elevation in the race. This race route is mostly flat with very slight elevation change. Typical of a backcountry trail, Leg Three on the 2002 CDR was also where the respondents saw some horses. A few respondents also saw bears on this Leg. While the horses served as transportation for the race marshals, the bears were the unexpected spectators at the race. Like the first two sections, Leg Three proved to be a mixture of fun, enjoyment, frustration and disappointment for the respondents.

Although Leg Three was supposedly the easiest section in the Death Trail, it proved to be a bit too long for Violet and Jo, who were running together. Violet summed up her experience of Leg Three in two sentences: “Leg Three was really tough. That was the one that ... we found was too long, too much road and I did not like the road part at all.” This part of the run frustrated both Violet and Jo because the road seemed to go on forever. Neither Violet nor Jo explained why a long road bothered them, but Bear Scare offered some insight into why road running can sometimes be discouraging:

I do not know. It is the pavement, the pounding, it seems so long like at the Death Race, there was both. We did experience some highway running and in the trails.

And the distances are almost disguised, it is disguised when it is in the trails and I have to say that it is very disguised, the amount of distance you are covering. You get out on the highway like after Leg 3, you can see the furthest point that you have to achieve and it just seems so far away and it seems to take so long to get there, it is boring, it is...yeah all those things.

While Leg Three proved to be difficult for some respondents, for others, it was a chance to experience new things. Leg Three provided Tigger with solitude, which she appreciated:

The third leg, I mainly remember coming down the cobbled path, it is just a cobblerly thing but what I remember clearly about it is that I was by my own for a long time and I really enjoyed it. I knew that it was a straight forward path all the way down so I was not hassled about missing some things or worried about, "should I have turned off or whatever," And that was really nice. I enjoyed the feeling of solitude. Just being away and being able to go my pace and I was still feeling pretty strong and I think I was a little surprised that I was able to run all of that, so you know, if there was a little bit of an uphill, I would walk it but otherwise, I ran most of it till then. And then some people came by on horses and that was really nice, you know. It was just nice to see something different instead of, you know, the odd runner around or whatever. Yeah that was a very calm time, I was really relaxed into it and I was feeling comfortable with where I was, with what I was eating and what I was drinking.

For Tigger, solitude was an important aspect of trail running. Her ability to be comfortable with her surroundings gave Tigger time and space to be 'herself'. Especially in a natural environment, solitude allowed the respondents to contemplate and reflect on their lives. It allowed them to experience personal growth and to re-enforce their positive self-identity. Thus, when Python was asked what his thoughts were during his run in the wilderness, he replied:

Could be anything. Could be a business scheme, thinking about my Dad, could be a song stuck in my head, anything! I do not know. I do not think that people spend enough time by themselves, personally. I think people are scared to be by themselves but I do not know if it is built into us genetically, that we are social creatures, but I do not know. I like solitude to a point but I like it for me. It gives me personal space I guess. And I crave that.

This comment suggests that the experience of solitude is an important factor for some of the participants in races held in remote natural locations. However, the other respondents did not explicitly refer to solitude even though many mentioned that they were alone during most of the race.

Besides solitude, novelty was also something that Tigger and Moose Bait experienced while running Leg Three. While Tigger merely heard gunshots, Moose Bait narrowly missed meeting one bear and later saw three of them:

But this year, I guess there was a bear that ran behind me on Leg Three. I did not see it, I did not hear it, but a relay runner passed me and said, "Hey there is a bear that ran behind you" and I was like "Oh! Okay!" <laughter> But I saw three bears at the bridge, the Smoky River Bridge, beside the coal mine but the conservation officer was there with his rifle and no big deal. Yeah first time I have seen bears.

Like Moose Bait, Cheetah also enjoyed Leg Three, which he described as a 'ton of fun':

Leg Three was a ton of fun. Just because you knew that you were coming back. At the end of leg two, you were back into town. You come down that big ugly hill coming into town on the pole, Leg Three, you are in town again and you basically know that it is going to be relatively flat, just like Leg One.

Knowing what to 'expect' was beneficial. Being able to anticipate and deal with the upcoming challenges appeared to contribute to Cheetah's enjoyable experience in this Leg.

However, while Leg Three was enjoyable for some respondents, others described it in terms of anxiety, frustration and disappointment. The anxiety arose mainly out of the uncertainty caused by fatigue and dehydration. Old Smokey's uncertainty over his physical state caused him some anxiety as to whether he should press ahead to complete the race:

The third stage, it was not too difficult. I found it much longer than I had thought and I found about half way through the third leg, that I started feeling weak and that was because I had not eaten enough. I was carrying some energy bars and I

ate through those and after a while, I felt better. When I got to the end of the third leg, I was really wondering whether I should continue or not. I was tired, probably still a little weak and facing Mt Hamel, I knew that it would get dark soon.

Faced with uncertainty, Old Smokey might have also been anxious because he would have to ascend Mt Hamel, the most notorious ascent on the Death Trail. After some consideration, Old Smokey did decide to go on to attempt Leg Four, which he had ran as part of a relay team the year before. Unlike Old Smokey, Bear Scare was anxious because of the physical condition of her husband, Pat, who was running with her:

...then by leg three, legs were very tired and my husband got very quiet and I knew that he was having some problems with dehydration. So that really changed my mental state at that point. I started worrying a little bit about how he was doing. Personally I was still feeling very strong, my legs were tired but I did start worrying about him.

Although she was concerned for her husband, Bear Scare still tried hard to encourage him to complete Leg Three and tackle Leg Four, as they had done a month ago in a mock run.

LaGazelle, on the other hand became frustrated because of her running performance. Losing her way in the beginning stages of Leg Three, LaGazelle was suffering from her displaced hips:

And then I got lost in the third stage. I got lost and I started following the wrong markers. I started following the markers for the Kids Death Race, the following day because it was never explained to me the different colours: that yellow was for the kids and orange was for the adults. And there was a while when the yellow and orange was together and I went through yellow and I thought to keep following the yellow and the yellow ran out and I was going down this steep mountain with no marks and I thought "something is wrong" and then I had to retrace my steps all the way back and I had lost an hour of time and by then my hips were really hurting.

The frustration of having lost her way and the growing pain in her hips contributed to LaGazelle's decision to drop out of the Death run. Faced with choosing between long-term injury and short-term achievement, LaGazelle decided to drop out of the race. Since

she was using the 2002 CDR as a practice run for her big race in the Sahara desert, LaGazelle made a very practical decision, choosing to save herself for her race in the desert. Although her decision was rational, LaGazelle still expressed some disappointment:

I wanted to finish this race, you will always hate pulling out, but there is a certain point where it is smart to keep going and it is stupid to keep going. There is a fine line, right? And I got to the point where I just knew it would be stupid to continue for me because I may not make the checkpoint, and ...Like I am injured, this is not my major race and I am not going to get better from this point on, I am going to get worse. I am just going to face facts, I cannot go on.

Characterized by moments of enjoyment, calm, frustration, anxiety and some boredom, Leg Three still proved to be a rather positive experience for many respondents. While fatigue had started to set in, the respondents' focus on the race was also beginning to be diverted by injuries sustained or re-aggravated, or by trying to enjoy the scenery and environments. At the end of Leg Three, Old Smokey and Cheetah found themselves questioning their ability to proceed with Leg Four.

5.2.2.4 Leg four: Hamel assault.

The longest leg of the race Leg Four was the section of the race that the respondents most dreaded. Perceived by the respondents as their nemesis, Mt Hamel, the one summit along this 33 km route, was covered in about 1.2m of snow during the 2002 CDR (Korobanik, 2002). Because Mt Hamel presented a sudden elevation change of 1981.2 m, runners commonly believed that if they could safely ascend and descend this mountain within the cut-off times, nothing but physical impairments could stop them from finishing the race. A tricky section of this leg was the Ambler Loop, a trail the respondents had to run down, during their descent of Mt Hamel. Overall, Leg Four gave

the respondents a variety of feelings and sensations. During this leg, 2 respondents were forced to drop out of the race and eventually only 7 respondents completed the race successfully.

During the early parts of Leg Four, two respondents were fighting internal battles. Bugged down by their physical fatigue, Cheetah and Old Smokey both rested for about 20 to 30 minutes and assisted by their family members, both pondered on their ability to continue. Old Smokey, remembered his concerns at this stage of the race:

When I got to the end of the third leg, I was really wondering whether I should continue or not. I was tired, probably still a little weak and facing Mt Hamel, I knew that it would get dark soon...Some of my family members were there and they felt that I should not go on but I am real glad that I did.

Going against the advice to quit at the beginning of Leg Four, Old Smokey allowed his determination to prevail and chose to continue. In doing so, Old Smokey displayed the kind of determination and mental grit also demonstrated by other respondents in the face of fatigue and, sometimes, injuries. For example, Python spoke of his fall during his descent of Mt Hamel:

Off the start, like off coming down the backside, by the time I did Ambler Loop, and there was a downhill going down towards the last aid station, at that point, I do not know, I popped three or four ibuprofens. By that time, I think...well my foot was in my runner but swelling up above my whole foot, it was just awkward—yeah I think that would be a good word. But pain was not anything...it was more kind of like bummed out, shit...But I did not do anything about it, did not do anything stupid, I just eased my way in, took the hour and a half. I did not try to maintain that I pushed myself to where I really hurt my ankles. So I was more or less slow and easy, finish the race.

By focusing and concentrating on the positive, Python accepted his injury as part of the race experience and chose not to dwell on it. Instead he tried to look at the positive—that he could still finish the race, albeit slowly and awkwardly. This kind of thinking was

especially prevalent during Leg Four, when many respondents encountered fatigue, injuries and many unexpected challenges or situations.

However, Moose Bait and Bear Scare were unable to manipulate their thoughts in this manner. Having experienced some knee problems during the second leg of the race, Moose Bait had tried to remedy the situation in whatever way he could, but to no avail.

Accepting the frustration of not completing his third Death Run, Moose Bait chose to exit the race, in an 'honourable' fashion: by making sure he walked out of the race by himself and not carried out on a stretcher.

The focusing helped with the hamstrings but once my knee locked, and what I mean by lock is the knee hyper extending, they were hyper extending backwards and once that happened, the once was like "argghhhh", maybe it's just me, but the second time it happened, and these were on the few little flat areas on Hamel, where it is up about 2 km and flattens out for about 30 metres and goes back up, and when I locked it up the third time, it was like I stopped and tried to stretch out and nope, if I had gone any further, they would have had to helicopter me just because I would have been high enough up and it would take me hours to come down or ATVE me out—which is not good. <laughter> I much rather do it on my own then do it that way. (Moose Bait)

Like Moose Bait, Bear Scare was also frustrated when she had to drop out from the race.

Her running partner had succumbed to dehydration and decided to turn back from the ascent up Mt Hamel. Bear Scare's frustration over her decision to quit the race was evident:

It was a tough decision coming down Mt Hamel. That was really tough and that was disappointing and that was really tough. Knowing that "Oh my God, I am quitting!" You know I do not quit in things very easily and all of a sudden I am making this decision to quit and mentally it was just weird like I was not ready to quit physically but I was definitely going to...we were hanging back. That was tough, it was surreal like I am not really walking down this mountain right now, this really is not happening. Because for months I have been visualizing the finish line and all that and really mentally preparing. That was not a part of my mental preparation so that was very weird. I broke down, like I was really strong for my husband for about 10-15 minutes and then that was it. We started joking around

again about five minutes after this and be strong for the rest of my group and that⁹ was it.

Having attempted the Death Run 2002 with her husband and members of her community from small-town Alberta, Bear Scare still managed to overlook her own disappointments and focus on the larger picture: she was supporting not only her husband, but also the rest of her group.

The fatigue from having run 70 km also took its toll on some of the other respondents. For Tigger, the snow on Mt Hamel increased the frustration that she was already feeling:

But I enjoyed a lot of the first climb of Hamel on my own and I think may, I may have caught somebody who went past me or whatever or they came past me quickly, so I was still...I enjoyed that part a bit still. I did not have a little bit of the dark in the back of my mind, you know, what was it going to be like once it got dark? But while the track was still pretty open, I enjoyed that. I started getting cold but the thing that I find with the trail is that, it does not matter what is coming, I invariably still enjoy it. So I enjoyed it until I got onto the snow section, I did not remember exactly when we hit the snow, I remember just kept on going up and up and some guys with four wheel drives and I was just enjoying the.... At one stage going up Hamel, I started getting a little bit frustrated for the first time because of the snow. I was slipping all over and I was too tired to correct myself from that. Starting to feel like I was using up a lot of energy and I was getting a little frustrated and that, I could not really see...I could see where the people have tramped, but you could not see where it was a slippery section, my footing was going wrong and I was feeling a little bit frustrated, and it was the first time I was frustrated in the snow.

Although the snow and ice on the trail on Mt Hamel frustrated Tigger, she still enjoyed Leg Four. Similarly, other respondents also experienced the snow and ice as an impediment but still remembered Leg Four positively.

One potentially positive experience during Leg Four was the chance to run in the dark. Given that Mt Hamel is ran in the later part of the race, it was almost a given that all the respondents would encounter a few hours of darkness along the trail as they ascended

or descended the mountain. Those who commented on running in darkness expressed different feelings. Many of the respondents were excited by this novel experience. For Cheetah, running in the dark helped to conceal the distances that he had to cover and therefore added an element of the unknown to this run:

I like running in the dark. For me that is fun because...well my neck is still sore from running in the dark and it is sore from the altitude it was at because it was either craned down or craned back up, looking for markers, so it was never on a normal plane. But I like running in the dark, because you have really no perception of how fast you are travelling so sometimes when you are tired, it is easier to cover more ground that way. You are scooping along and all of a sudden you are where you are supposed to be and you have no idea how you had gotten that far that fast. I like running in the dark, that is fun. To me, that is enjoyable.

This sense of novelty was also something that Jo enjoyed during Leg Four. She remembered the fun of running in the dark, and searching for markers to ensure that they (Jo was running with her parents) were on the right track:

Leg four, it was fun. When it was dark and we had the lights and stuff, we had to check and look for all the dots and stuff, on top of Mt Hamel was fun. I liked going down the trails...

In contrast, the darkness gave Old Smokey some stress when he ran out of batteries during his descent of Mt Hamel:

It really slowed me down a lot. And it was worrying. And again because I had been on the trail the year before, I knew I would not get lost or anything, just really slowed me down. And then you start thinking about bears and that, you think of your light as a bit of protection at least against a bear. But I would say I had to run for bout half and hour before I got light, the other guy that showed up and everything was fine. They had lights and I followed them.

From his comments, it is evident that Old Smokey was not too worried, as he was familiar with the course route. However, trying to get across the snow and the ice in the dark slowed him down because he had to be careful not to fall.

Although the darkness bothered some of the respondents, it did not destroy their enjoyment of Leg Four, which turned out to be a morale and ego booster for them. Given the perception of Mt. Hamel as the biggest barrier to the successful completion of the Death Run, successfully ascending and descending this mountain definitely increased the confidence of those respondents who did so. For example, Old Smokey commented:

As I got to the top, I started feeling really good and for the rest of the race, I felt...I think a lot more confident that I could finish. I think that maybe Mt Hamel was...a bit of a mental barrier and once I realised that I could overcome that, I felt that I could finish the race and felt better.

For other respondents like Violet and her family, getting past Mt Hamel also intensified their determination to finish the race.

Leg four, I was ready for it. I was mentally prepared, it was tough, it was slippery, there were lots of snow on the top—from a foot to three feet—and I just was really prepared and I was, you know, going on the down part...actually, on top of Mt Hamel, we had to be there at 11.30pm—that was the cut-off time—we were there at 11.15pm, so what was going through my head was that we were not going to make the cut-off time for the bottom of Mt Hamel, and same with my family. And we just stuck it out, I really went hard. I think we have to go hard, we have to run, we have to make up time and did lots of praying on the top. "Give us strength, give my family strength because they wanted to quit" They were at the point where my husband wanted to quit and we got some strength back. After the Ambler Loop, going down Beaver Dam road, the last 6 km, we ran those last 6 km and we just got pumped up, we just felt really good an...I felt you know what? We are going to do this. (Violet)

While Violet and her family were descending Mt Hamel, they suddenly felt a sense of excitement in the air; excitement about completing the race. Similarly, when Cheetah arrived at the checkpoint to start Leg Five, he also knew that he could finish the race:

When I left leg three and I talked to my wife, I said, "If I get off the mountain, I actually do get off Hamel, there is nothing that will stop me from finishing this race, except for the lack of time." So with that in mind and after a lot of thought, 25 km six hours, for me, which is usually an hour and a half,...away I went.

Prompting a variety of feelings, Leg Four was still a positive experience for many respondents. Given that most of them who attempted this leg were successful, their knowledge that they could start Leg Five and then complete the run within the 24-hour time limit gave most of them encouragement. This positive feeling acted as an energizer for them as they began Leg Five.

5.2.2.5 Leg five: The tunnel and the raft ride home.

Leg Five provided a break for the respondents in the middle of its 26 km route, but had an elevation change of over 762 m. Following a river crossing in a white-water raft after the first 10 km of trail, the last 15 km of the trail continues on the other side of the Sulphur River. The river crossing enabled the respondents to get off their feet and sit down. The last 7 km of the race had the participants scrambling to find a 'mailbox' that held the stamp that they had to emboss their ferry ticket with, as a proof that they had completed the route. The punishment for failing to obtain this stamp in Leg Five was very harsh. Those without such a stamp would be disqualified (DQ).

Throughout their descriptions of their experiences on this leg, most respondents remembered their happiness at the thought of finishing the race. With just 26 km to go, the respondents knew in their hearts that they were going to make it. For example, Violet explained that this knowledge motivated her and her running partners, energizing them to complete Leg Five in a much faster time than that of the other respondents:

Like I...leg five, was , you know, some uphill and...but we knew that we wanted to make it. I knew at the point that we were about that far and we had to just go. So it took us three hours instead of...most people had took five to five and a half hours, and we had to just "give her" to make the cut-off time. And I just felt really good mentally.

Despite the 99 km behind them and having been running for the last 20 hours, Violet and her running partners were able to complete Leg Five in 3 hours instead of the average time of the 5 hours. Similarly, the thought of finishing also helped Cheetah to complete the race:

And basically once we got off the trail, I could not run anymore. My legs were just too tired and too spent, so I walked as fast as I could. I probably walked about 6 km, maybe 7 km an hour, so really sharp, hard walk, and I could crawl 15 km in three hours and no matter what happened, I could finish the race.

Consumed by fatigue, Cheetah was still determined to complete the race through any means available to him.

In spite of the psychological boost that this leg gave to most respondents, it was also fraught with moments of anxiety and fear. The cause of most of the anxiety was the search for the elusive mailbox during the last 7 km of the run. Already bogged down by fatigue, many respondents felt their anxiety increased as they searched (sometimes in the dark) for the cursed mailbox. Cheetah's description of his search for the mailbox revealed his mounting frustration with each minute of not being able to find the mailbox:

So then, I was, "Where is this box? Where is this box and if I do not find the damned box, am I going to be DQ? 120 km behind me and I am NOT going to get DQ because of a STAMP!"

With 120 km behind him, Cheetah was definitely not going to give up. Fortunately, only one participant in the race missed the mailbox and was eventually disqualified. While the search for the mailbox caused anxiety, Tigger's experience of Leg Five was more of fear. Having started Leg Five at around midnight, Tigger felt almost overwhelming while running alone in the dark:

And then we got into the last changeover, I got in at midnight. I knew that I had been in time but then it was just really... I did not want to sit around too long, I just wanted to finish. I was scared about going into the dark, thing was I was

really nervous because of the bears....because of the thought of the bears, otherwise I was okay with the dark and all I wanted to do was to finish. I remember walking up this little bit of road and then heading off into the thick bush and then I was wishing that somebody was around and there was nobody, ... and I was looking from tree to tree to see the light, really hoping that someone would come...I was very scared and just wanted it to be over, especially in the dark because I was on my own then. It was the first time, I did not enjoy being on my own and another girl caught me, she came past me too quickly and I tried to stick with her and I still remember thinking, "She is so rude!" because she did not, you know, she kind of just went on and I was trying to stick with her and I could not <laughter>. So I was mad at her because I really wanted to stay with somebody in that part, just because I was scared. And she had poles and was hitting them together and I just went, "Oh! Do not leave me..." And I wanted to get out of the thick bush and bush that I would have normally enjoyed in the day and maybe I would have enjoyed it more at night if I was feeling less tired but I just wanted to get it over with and I was a bit scared of the bears, whatever was around.

Tigger was overwhelmed by the thought of bears and not knowing exactly what to do if she ran into one. During the Death Run 2002, two male competitors were 'tree-ed' by a mother bear and her cub (Korobanik, 2002) somewhere on the latter part of Leg Four.

With her fear of large animals in the back of her mind, Tigger was relieved when she ran into an American runner, and eventually, she finished the race with him.

The respondents felt their greatest relief when victory was secured, the race was completed, and they could get off their feet. This relief was often accompanied by a kind of delirious happiness.

When they put the tape out, well I did not win and I did not want to run through because you are delirious and you been through what you been through, so I was happy when they snapped my finishing photo, I actually had a smile with my hands over my head because I realised that they were doing this for everybody that came through the line. I was really happy at that and it was definitely my best finishing shot that I have ever had. I was still smiling and I looked okay, and in a marathon I looked a lot worse than that. (Cedar)

Cedar's actions of holding her hands over her head suggested her incomparable joy. Of course, she had a good reason to be happy. She was looking better than she had looked

during her marathon finishes, even though the Death Race was three times the distance of a marathon and probably many times harder.

In all, Leg Five was characterized mainly by feelings of happiness, fear, joy and, upon completion of the race, relief. While fear arose mainly from uncertainty, the respondents' general experiences during this leg were positive, energized, and joyful.

5.2.2.6 Key moments.

When asked what their 'key' moments were in the 2002 CDR, many respondents defined them as aspects of the run that stood out for them and were likely to be the events that would remain etched in their minds in the future. The most prominent experiences that stood out for the respondents were running across Washy Creek in Leg One, negotiating 'The Gauntlet' in Leg Two, ascending Mt Hamel in snowy conditions in Leg Four, and arriving at the finishing line of the 2002 CDR in Leg Five. The scenery along the race route was also a feature that some respondents commented on.

And when I saw the town coming down the second hill, I will always remember that because it was so beautiful, you are so high up and looking down at the town, you just thought, "WOW!"... That was good, I liked that. (LaGazelle)

Although the respondents did not have much time or opportunity to enjoy the scenery (it was a cloudy day that day and fog and mist were also present on the mountain summits), those who did remember it, especially the snow on tree tops as well as the views from the summits (whenever the clouds decided to break up), were very enthusiastic in their descriptions of it.

Another feature that played a pivotal role for respondents in their experiences of the 2002 CDR were the people present at it. Many respondents felt that the people they

had came into contact with at the Death Race, from the race organizers to the town folks, were all important parts of the experience in Grande Cache and the Death Run. Moose Bait, a two-time finisher of the race, expressed his admiration for the race directors, Dale, Paul, and Keith.

I think that Dale and Paul and Keith now, God they are...I just have a great time with them. And I mean I am a real supporter because I have brought their brochures like to Europe last year when I went to Switzerland, got Dale to send me a whole bunch of brochures, and I brought them over to the marathon there and this year I have already offered him and he has accepted for me to bring brochures to Dublin Marathon where there will be 8300 people.

Moose Bait's affiliation to the Death Race extended beyond that of a paying participant.

His positive experiences with the race organizers have prompted him to promote the race internationally.

While the race directors played a pivotal role in Moose Bait's experience of the race, the other participants were important to Python, a three-time finisher of the race:

Just to see other people getting inspired about I guess, something that I hold true to my heart, that is just cool to see. People that you would not normally see out running. In the Death Race, especially you see like, I do not want to sound mean but like Clydesdale-type people: people that are definitely not your running type and they are not in their thousand dollar lycra outfit that half the people in the race are wearing. It is neat to be inspired to see that there is a family out there doing this....I was impressed, I just through that was so cool like talking to the Dad, I just stumbled over him having a cup of coffee and talking to the Dad. He is there with his daughter and his wife, and I just thought that is cool!

Inspired by his fellow participants, Python expressed his delight in watching people partake in the activity that he loves so much. As well, Python was also inspired by the stories that he heard at these events.

For Old Smokey, meeting a friend during the race was one key moment for him. When asked what stood out for him during the race, Old Smokey replied, "I think the friendship I developed with that person at the end of the race, the last leg and a half was a

key moment." While running the last part of the race with a fellow competitor, Old Smokey got to know another competitor fairly well. Furthermore, Old Smokey indicated, at the time of the interview, that he was still in touch with his new friend a month after the event.

For other respondents, the positive role of the race marshals and volunteers during the race left them with a deep impression. For Moose Bait, these people gave him a sense of security:

Oh God yeah. The volunteers are AWESOME. Oh they are awesome. I remember one lady...the first year or was it last year... She wore a mask, the death costume at Ambler Loop which is at the end of leg four, I remember her, when I saw the video for the Outdoor Live Network (OLN), I was like "Hey I remember her!" <excited and slapping the table> I was so happy to see her because I had not seen anybody in an hour or two and round the corner, there it is, "Aid Station!!!"... but you are still happy to see them. But the volunteers are always so happy. Even though it is a wilderness run, you never feel completely alone because when you are going and have not seen anybody in 45 minutes, an hour, two hours, round the corner and there is an All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) right in the middle, right parked with a radio and [saying to you]"Good Job!" and he sits there or she and is looking out for you. It is a nice feeling.

Having encouraging volunteers and race marshals around made a difference for respondents like Moose Bait because they made him feel that someone was looking out for him during the race. The volunteers' enthusiasm also sometimes encouraged runners like Moose Bait. A fatigued and tired runner always appreciates a good laugh.

Another group of people who helped shape the experiences of many respondents were their supporters. Many of them were spouses, children, or siblings of the respondents. Having the personal support of people whom the respondents were close to definitely made a difference for many of them. For Tigger, being supported by her spouse and daughter could have enabled her to reduce her running times by two hours:

But I think the biggest difference was having personal support, coming from my family. And it is two people, apart from all the stuff that I organized, my running shoes, and things, just having contact with somebody and encouragement from somebody, on a personal level, that makes a massive difference. Think about the Death Race, unsupported, could add on two hours. You know, two hours, because it is going to affect the way you are. You start really looking forward to see more people, you know, so even if I left the same sort of supplies, and had not personal supporters, I would have been a very different sort of psychological competitor.

Knowing that her loved ones were 'participating' with her in the overall experience of the race gave Tigger an added boost. Perhaps the feeling that she was not alone in her quest made her feel more motivated to succeed for the sake of the 'team' comprising of her husband, her daughter and herself.

Finally, all the spectators also were important factors for some respondents. While adventure races of this nature are not known to be a 'spectator sport' because of the isolated locations of the events and, very often, the unpredictable amount of time between each checkpoint, Bear Scare remembered the spectator's enthusiasm during the 2002 CDR:

I will never forget how exciting it was with the crowds there and the cheering and the...that was big for me because I had never done a marathon or a half marathon so I had never experienced that high you get from hearing the crowds and stuff and that was very exciting.

During her first 'big' race, Bear Scare found the cheering crowds (mainly made up of supporters and townspeople) absolutely exciting, as did the other respondents who had been in similar races before.

All the five legs provided a potpourri of feelings, sensations and thoughts, causing moments of euphoria, sadness, excitement, peacefulness, pain, joy, fear, anticipation, frustration and calmness. Many of the causes of these feelings arose from the challenges posed by the trail conditions, weather extremes, and the respondent's physical and mental

states. The respondent's also had many novel experiences throughout the race, giving them moments of enjoyment and, sometimes, fear and frustration. As well, the Death Trail's environment provided the kind of remoteness and roughness that respondents were likely to enjoy.

5.2.3 Recollection.

When remembering the 2002 CDR, all the respondents had something to say about it, regardless of whether they completed it or not. The interviews revealed the many meanings that the respondents attached to the Death Trail. Some noted that the race was indeed mentally and physically challenging, just as they had anticipated:

But it has so much to do with your mental strength. I mean you can be...I am a pretty fit guy and my physical fitness ceased at around 50 km, and from that point forward, it was mental toughness that got me through the race. (Cheetah)

Cheetah's mention of the mental aspects of the Death Run brings out an important point: that cognition is critical in meeting the goal of completing the race. The role that cognition plays will be discussed later. Moreover, the respondents also remembered, the Death Run as a somewhat lonely race for solo runner simply because of the long periods of time that they ran alone:

They all came up and met me at the finish line, because it is not the best spectator sport in the world, doing ultra-marathons or anything. I will see you in four hours, I will see you in six hours, I will be waiting for you at the finish line at like 3 a.m. in the morning. (Python)

During the Death Race, the respondents often did not see anyone familiar during long periods of time. Even their own support crews were likely to have seen them once every three to four hours. All the respondents understood that this race was a tough race that required them to have the ability to deal with all weather and terrain conditions, without

the support of the large numbers of spectators who usually attend road races. Moreover, as well as perceiving the race as a personal challenge, many of the respondents also saw the run as an opportunity to view the natural area surrounding the race route:

Leg two, like the top of the mountains, this year I was actually disappointed that I could not see the town because the mountains were clouded and you cannot see a thing and I think that was bad for people who was their first time, because it is, gorgeous out there, when you look over from the other side away from town...(Moose Bait)

Finally, many respondents also saw the Death Race as a unique experience in itself. For those who had done marathons, triathlons and adventure races, this race was truly a unique experience, teaching them new things about themselves and their abilities:

There are parts where there are people around me but never the same person for long. It was not like a normal...like a marathon where you end up kind of being with the same group in the crowd or a triathlon on a bike, there would be all these same persons that...yeah that race was seen as a change every time...It was just so much fun. (Cedar)

A unique experience that stood out above all the competitions that she had taken part in, the 2002 CDR definitely added on to Cedar's wealth of racing experience. The novelty of her experience was probably what made her so enthusiastic about the whole race in general, so much so that she had already committed herself to going back in 2003.

In retrospect, the respondents all seemed to have emerged from the race with a very positive attitude, suggesting that their 2002 CDR experience was a good experience in spite of all the hardships. As optimistic individuals, all four respondents who did not finish (DNF) expressed their interest in returning to challenge themselves yet again to finish this very difficult race. When asked if his failure at the Death Race this year had made him lose interest in the race and in the area of Grande Cache, Moose Bait exclaimed:

Nope, nope you know, it just makes me want to do it more. I am still looking forward to doing it next year when it gets to the 100 miles. I want to do it, no questions. Because it is always tough and there is a challenge of going faster, which this year I should have gone a lot faster and I was on pace to go a lot fast...so until you have gone as fast as you possibly can, it is always: "Well, I will train a little harder and do a little more...and I will do this and I will do that, improve your training a bit," and yeah, the goals is to always go faster and kind of beat the course before it beats you. This year it beat me...

None of the respondents who did not complete the race expressed any disappointment in the town or the place itself. All their disappointment was in themselves for not having completed the race. For LaGazelle and Bear Scare, the benefit that they had gained from the 2002 CDR was the growth that they had experienced in participating in the race:

And I said, "You know, this is not a big race and I will be back again next year. I enjoyed the experience and I learnt a lot and I met some new people. I see it all as a positive experience and the fact that I did not finish was, you know, disappointing but you know, I will be back again next year." (LaGazelle)

Just that it was an experience of a lifetime. It was a growth, extreme growing experience, that I would recommend anybody to do it. Too many people are afraid to fail, the fear of failure and I think people should push themselves to do—step outside of the box. And that is the end of it. (Bear Scare)

Reflecting upon their experience at the Death Run 2002 and seeing it as a positive experience, both Bear Scare and LaGazelle expressed the feelings of the other two respondents who DNF. One lesson learned from the race was the importance of mind over matter. To Jo, Violet, and Old Smokey, their first attempt at the Death Run proved to them the power of the mind. They believed that if one was willing to set one's mind on a goal, it can be achieved with hard work and perseverance. In some respects, completing this race also increased their self-confidence. For example, Old Smokey explained:

I think it has put a lot of confidence in myself. I think I really honestly surprised myself that I was able to do it. I think the experience of training for it is something so positive and you can relate to in all kinds of different life situations. That if you have a goal in mind, you can work for it or if not, stay behind. I think it is a real positive aspect.

Recollecting the lessons he had learned while training for the race, Old Smokey mentioned their usefulness not only in helping to improve his running but were perhaps also applicable to other aspects of his life. His ability to extend the lessons that he learned from training and racing made this race more significant to him.

In contrast, for Cedar, the 2002 CDR was taken to be another enjoyable race experience. The experience at the 2002 CDR gave her an opportunity to do what she liked, and because of the fun she had, and also because she had not achieved her goals (she had gone to win), she expressed her desire to go back to win in 2003:

Yeah I was kind of hoping that it would be a 100 miler next year but they said "No". It is only 125 km, too many people did not want to go there. I figured I might have an advantage because maybe people would not be ready to run that long, so "bring it on!" <laughter>

For Cheetah, completing this race, was not only another achievement for him, but also was an affirmation of the values that he held true in his running as well as in his life:

Oh yeah, finishing that race was definitely an unbelievable achievement...well, just having the guts to start the race after you get there, with the weather conditions we had, is an accomplishment in itself.... I honestly was not ready for the punishment that I was about to be put through but you got to take what the day gives you, right? I know a lot of people...if they do not do what they think they are capable of, they will stop a race...To me that is wrong. If you start something, whether you are a professional or an amateur, whether you are being paid or not, you start something, you give it everything you can to finish. You do not just quit just because you are not going to win. That is wrong...I was given a gift to run, both physically and mentally and I take it pretty seriously because I know that somewhere I have talking, or will talk to a child about anything and everything around running and it is a pretty big statement to say that after 26 years, there is not a race that I have not completed, there have been races that I have not won, I have won a lot too.... but I have never stopped because I was not going to win. And young people need to get that message loud and clear, because there are a lot of people that when it gets tough, they just want to stop. And if you stop in a footrace, guess what, you are going to stop in the other pastime called life and that is when people kill themselves, start drinking, wind up on drugs, and if you can find meaning in anything, and I mean in anything, it does not have to be running,

ping pong, drawing, sculpture, and if you can find meaning in that as a pastime, then you can find meaning in life. It is pretty simple.

Clearly, by finishing the race, Cheetah reaffirmed his belief in his motto, "When I start something, I will complete it." For this reason, the 2002 CDR might also have been an experience that stood out for Cheetah.

The respondents' reflections were very insightful and indicated the importance of the recollection phase in their overall experience. The above comments suggest that the re-collection phase did make a significant contribution to the respondent's overall experience. The lessons learnt by the respondents were also a reflection of their goal-orientations in their participation of the race.

By choosing to learn from their experience in the 2002 CDR, the respondents demonstrated a strong tendency to have a mastery goal-orientation. This orientation makes an athlete more likely to concentrate on the learning and mastering of a skill, than on competing with others (Roberts, 1992). As well, this orientation also allows athletes to focus internally on how they have been able to develop their skills in the current performance compared to the previous performance (Weinberg & Gould, 1995). The mastery goal-orientation has also been associated with the notion of secondary control, or control exerted on the internal self, and manifested through cognition, instead of through physical action.

5.3 Control

Earlier, it was noted that a sense of control might have affected the attachment of individuals to their racing environments. This section will discuss the respondents' preferred means of control when they were racing in the wilderness and how these forms

of control were conceptualized and changed with varying circumstances and situations. In addition, following a brief discussion of the manifestations of primary and secondary control in the respondents' adventure-race situation, the type of control exerted by the respondents and the effects it had on their sense of place attachment will also be presented. Recalling that both primary and secondary control is usually both present in any situation, the issue here was to determine which type of control dominated during a runner's participation in the 2002 CDR.

While the findings suggest that the respondents' tended to use secondary control, as opposed to primary control, their comments also aligned well with the notion of the mastery goal-orientated athlete. Although both forms of control was found to be exerted by the respondents during the race, it was shown that they tended to favour the use of secondary control, in a wilderness environment. Control exerted during the race tended to be cognitive in nature and focused not upon an external but an internal source—often on the respondents themselves. It is believed that the findings presented in the next sections support the claim that secondary control is used in most wilderness situations.

5.3.1 Primary control.

The respondents believed that primary control, also known as 'absolute control,' occurred mainly during their pre-race preparations, where the nature of their control was manifested through their actions involving external, tangible objects. The pre-race preparation included actions such as training for the race, acquiring the appropriate gear and equipment, and selecting the food and liquids that would be consumed during the course of the race. The activity of finding out more about the place and the environments

of the race could also be regarded as part of the pre-race preparation process. While some respondents attended training camp, those who did not relied on the description of the race route that was made available on the The Canadian Death Race website or their past experiences. As well, some respondents also 'checked out' the course route a day before the race. All these actions can be conceptualized as forms of primary control. For example, when asked if she preferred having absolute control, Tigger replied:

In some ways, I like to be prepared beforehand, not necessarily in control but I like to have a feel for it so it is important for me to check out some of the points before the race, so that I will know a little bit of what is happening but not enough that I want to go and run the whole course.

Here, Tigger seemed to equate pre-race preparation with primary control because 'checking out a part of the route before a race' is an action involving outcomes that a person has control over. Nevertheless, Tigger also revealed her desire to not have a sense of absolute control, for she omitted some areas of the race route during her pre-race check. In doing so, Tigger also illustrated the idea that in most human situations, two forms of control exist: primary control, where individuals are able to have control over some aspect of the situation, and secondary control, where individuals are left to rely on their cognitive and mental abilities. Very often, the respondents' comments about control indicated two forms of control. Bear Scare, for example described her moments of feeling 'out of control':

From Tuesday onwards, when we heard it was snowing in Grande Cache, when we heard that there was 17 cm of snow in the last few days, I really felt out of control. Then when we pulled in Thursday and I could see even at different elevations, you could see the snow and it was not even that high. The elevation was not even that high and you could see snow? And you could not even see the top of Hamel, and that was a weird, definitely feeling out of control. And then so... we had to start preparing again mentally. I remember going to the hardware store and getting some ski pants, because I remember hearing people say, "If you are going to complete this, you have got to be prepared now for these elements."

So by Friday night, then again I felt like I had everything, we have done everything we need to do for those elements. I was feeling in control again by Friday night.

In terms of primary control, Bear Scare revealed that 'having control' meant that she had to be prepared for anything that came her way during the race. Despite her feeling of being in control, Bear Scare also acknowledged that along with the gear and equipment that she had acquired, reliance on her mental strength was still necessary to get her through the race. This reliance on cognitive measures indicated the potential exertion of secondary control at some point in time during the race. Bear Scare's comments implied her understanding that she would have limited opportunities to exert primary control during an adventure race.

Similarly, when describing the injuries he sustained during the 2002 CDR, Karakonte illustrated two things: the way primary control is conceptualized as being able to physically control an action or a thing, and the limited scope for primary control in the adventure-racing scenario.

This time, I was not in control. Because my desire and my body, my desire is saying "Finish it!". My body and everybody else is saying, "You are going to kill yourself. You will not be able to run ever again if you keep going for leg three." And I wanted to finish it. I thought that if I took the drugs, I could finish it. I was not...my body said, "No", I tried to pull myself and convince myself that if I took this I will be fine and if I went back long enough, the pain would go away. But as soon as I tried running, bang! The pain would be back even worse. (Karakonte)

Karakonte indicated that his inability to overcome his pain reflected his loss of control. He lost his primary control because he failed in being able to physically control his body. The circumstances that Karakonte found himself in also indicated the limited scope he had to exercise primary control. Immersed in the wilderness with a physically battered body, Karakonte tried to convince himself to continue the race but to no avail. If he had

been in a road race, perhaps he might have had more of a choice regarding the accessibility of medicine/painkillers and the possible surfaces that he could have run on such as cemented or paved roads.

The above comments revealed how the respondents' conceptualized primary control. In viewing primary control as the ability to prepare oneself for the challenges that the race route would present, the respondents also indicated an understanding of the limited scope for primary control in wilderness based races. As well, their recognition of the importance of mental strength during the race suggested that secondary control was likely to play a significant role in this type of race.

5.3.2 Secondary control.

Secondary control involves influence over cognitive objects, as opposed to 'real' physical objects and was manifested in many aspects of the race. Used by the respondents as a way to control and restrict their own thoughts during the race, secondary control was also used to re-focus their minds on their goals and to quell their fears throughout the race.

The power of the mind in helping the respondents keep their spirits up and hopes alive was a very important factor during the race. For example, when Violet was asked if she ever doubted her abilities to finish the race, she replied:

There may be a little bit there but then I knew...a friend of mine who did it last year said, "You know what? It is just going to be a challenge. It is going to be fun," he said "and it will be something different" and that is what I kept thinking about when I would see the snow. I thought, "Well, I am just going to go over what he said, and it is just going to be something different!"

Unable to exert primary control over the weather patterns and the features of her physical surroundings, Violet could only turn to 'controlling' her mind and reminding herself that the whole run was going to be a fun and different experience, and that she just had to try to enjoy it. Moreover, the other respondents also spoke in terms indicating that using secondary control was one of the only ways they could exert any form of control throughout the race. The respondents also used secondary control during times of fear, whether it was of the animals or just the surrounding darkness. Describing how he tried to cope with being without batteries while he was descending Mt Hamel, Old Smokey highlighted the importance of positive thinking:

I was a little frustrated because I thought that, "Gees, the light should last four hours. The light only lasted for less than two hours" and I thought it should have four hours anyways. Again, I had not thought about bears before but I started to think about them then. Thinking about falling, getting yourself across that snow, you really had to move quite slow but I think that what I kept telling myself was that you just have to keep on going and you can either reach the aid station where your batteries are or someone else to come along. I was able to convince myself here <laughter>.

While he could have stopped his descent of Mt Hamel and waited for someone else to come along, Old Smokey chose to make his way down the mountain in the dark. He did so by running slowly, thinking positively, and not panicking. The interviews with the other respondents also revealed the importance of being able to control one's thoughts. Whether they had to deal with fear, fatigue, or injury, most respondents felt that participating in a race of such a nature required one to be flexible simply because no attitude was viable.

When asked if he would have liked to have absolute control over the race situation, Cheetah replied:

No, you got to take it as it comes, you cannot... You learn very quickly in something like this that as much as you may prepare or as fit as you think you are, I describe these races as a thinking man's race, or woman for that matter. Which means that you have a plan, whatever that plan is, the day before the race and then you better be able to change that plan because whatever happens on the day happens on the day. You cannot change that. That is completely out of your control. Weather, moisture in the ground, not enough sleep the night before, not enough food in your system, a root twisted ankle, a whack on the head from a tree, there are so many things out there that can change your day for you and can change your day so fast, that if you do not have the ability to adapt, and think your way through the problem, no, you will never get done. So I do not try and control things out there but just try to adapt to what I am given.

In his reply, Cheetah explicitly mentioned the importance of adaptability and flexibility in races of this nature. Cheetah had probably recognized the limited opportunities for human control in races as such and thus convinced himself to adapt to the environmental and situational circumstances, than to be rigid about his original plans. Furthermore, respondents also acknowledged that their ability to react to the unexpected challenges presented during a race would also make the experience stand out.

Some respondents believed that the experience of overcoming unexpected hardships was easier to remember than the experience of carrying out some mundane activity. For example, when asked if she tended to remember her more difficult races better than those that were completed without too much hassle, LaGazelle replied:

I think you do. I think you do. Like it makes you a stronger person every time...instead of the first obstacle coming along and saying, "I quit!" you just do whatever you can at every obstacle and see it as a personal challenge and figure out what I can do to overcome this challenge and when you overcome this challenge, you feel great because you will be like, "Yeah, I am stronger than I thought I was" And so yeah, every time you confront an obstacle, and [are] able to work your way around it, you feel a sense of accomplishment.

LaGazelle's comment mentions self-accomplishment, which can also be seen as positive self-identity. Given that it may be factor affecting place attachment, these moments of positive self-identity may be most likely to emerge in situations where secondary control

is exercised (Ittleson, Franck & O'Hanlon, 1976). The unexpected challenges, obstacles and situations occurring within the wilderness environments provided the respondents with the opportunity to enhance their positive self-identity as they overcome these obstacles.

Finally, an interesting finding was that respondents did not favour secondary control simply because they had limited scope for exercising primary control. Not knowing what was to come, and having to exercise secondary control in situations when some form of 'control' was needed seemed to add more fun to the whole 2002 CDR. For example, Cedar expressed her desire for the 'new' and unexpected when she was asked if she liked to be in control of the situation when she was racing:

I like the newness I think. Not to be in control. Like I am not one, even if I do a marathon, I am not one that wants to know the course, I do not want to drive the course a day before. I like the newness. I like going to training camp and kind of seeing, and I was told that that was a good idea for me to go and see what it would be like, and I am glad that I did but it was not really for the trails, it was for knowing what kind of packs I should be using and things other than the tips that he gave us and things. It could have been a brand new trail that was marked, and I would have been just as happy because it felt all new. It is always different and I would have remember all these. Yeah just the newness when I run on trails I have never done....I do not want to know. I find it more fun to just go along.

The other respondents also expressed little desire for absolute control over the race conditions. Secondary control helped to satisfy the need for novelty, which was so important for the respondents. The novelty of the situations in which they were able to overcome unexpected challenges, also helped to make those situations and their locations particularly memorable.

This section has shown that most of the respondents favoured some form of control in the situations they were immersed in. While 'control' to the respondents were perceived as having 'absolute' control, the respondents' acknowledgment of the

importance of the mental aspects of the race indicated that secondary control was likely their favoured mode of control during the 2002 CDR.

The respondents' mastery goal-orientations indicated that secondary control would be their preferred mode of control, in the 2002 CDR. Their belief that they could learn from new experiences also reflected the respondents' flexibility in being willing to deal with anything that came their way. Overall, the interviews with the respondents, confirmed that secondary control was their favoured form of control in the wilderness situation of the race.

Given that the respondents were likely to have enhanced their positive self-identity in the context of the Death Run, because of the modes of control they exercised, it also seems likely that an attachment to places was fostered during the race. As a result of having overcome unexpected obstacles during the race, the respondents reinforced their positive self-identity. Since they felt that they were likely to remember these moments, then those moments could become 'significant' in their lives. If so, then it would seem that the respondents' sense of control was likely to have enhanced their attachment to place, whether or not their control was achieved through primary or secondary means.

5.4 Chapter Summary

Emphasizing the anticipation, on-site, and recollection phases of the 2002 CDR, this chapter provided insights into the respondents' various feelings and sensations as the race progressed. Their descriptions of the race revealed that the respondents anticipated the hardships that were to come. Although many had prepared for all-terrain running, the

unseasonable weather seemed to catch some respondents by surprise, while causing others to be apprehensive.

During the race itself, a variety of feelings and sensations tended to dominate all five legs of the race. Feelings such as frustration, peacefulness, sadness, happiness/joy were common sensations felt throughout the race. With their needs for novel challenges and experiences, beautiful scenery, and time for solitude satisfied at various points in the race, all respondents, whether successful or unsuccessful, had a fairly positive experience overall.

During the recollection phase, most respondents commented that the race had taught them important lessons about life and given them the opportunity to see and learn about new places, to compete with themselves and even to affirm their most important values. Choosing to learn valuable lessons from their failures and successes at the race, the respondents chose not to blame the environment, the race management, or their fellow competitors for their failures. Instead, they all accepted responsibility for themselves and their failures. Those who did not succeed expressed an interest to return again in 2003. Those that did succeed expressed a desire to return again to better their times and/or to win. While 2 respondents expressed a desire to win the race in 2003, the rest expressed an interest in improving their times in the upcoming race.

From the respondents' anticipations, an understanding of the purposes of training camps was gained. Evidently, training camp merely provided some of the respondents an opportunity not only to learn about the race route but also to take in the views and enjoy the race's environments. As well, from the respondents' re-collections, it was seen that the re-collection phase had made a substantial impact on their overall race experiences.

From their lived experiences, the respondents' needs during the race were revealed including their needs for: novelty, challenge, and to connect with nature. In their recollections of the race, many respondents demonstrated an urge to compete with themselves to improve their skills and techniques, reflecting a mastery goal-orientation. Their tendency to have a mastery goal-orientation suggested, in turn, their preferred form of control during the race.

It was determined that when engaged in a race of this nature, the respondents preferred secondary control over primary control, partly because of the limited scope for primary control in this kind of race situations. Many respondents also felt that their demonstration of their adaptability and flexibility in dealing with unexpected challenges, helped them to remember those challenges better than they could remember other aspects of the race. As a result, the moments when they had overcome challenges become somewhat special. Finally it can be concluded that the exertion of secondary control in such a race increased the respondents' opportunities to experience special moments. Thus, can it not be concluded that the experience of the race enhanced the respondents' attachment to place?

Chapter VI

Place Attachment

I sat there and forgot and forgot, until what remained was the river that went by and I who watched. On the river the heat mirages danced with each other and then they danced through each other and then they joined hands and danced around each other. Eventually the watcher joined the river, and there was only one of us. I believe it was the river. (Maclean, 1976, p.61)

6.1 Introduction

'Place attachment' is defined as a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983). It can be broken down into the dimensions of place identity and place dependence. The former refers to how a place is able to help support, build, or provide an environment of belonging for individuals who wish to distinguish themselves. Place dependence refers to the idea that a place is able to provide for the immediate needs of the individual who is immersed in it. Place attachment varies on a continuum and in the extreme can result in an individual's willingness to protect a place from harm or destruction. However, depending on the level of attachment, actions manifesting place attachment may range from passive (e.g., petition writing) to active (e.g., lobbying). Taking into consideration that a 'place' is a physical space that has been endowed with human values, it also means that an infinite range of dimensions can be used to define a place (Hidaglo & Hernandez, 2001; Tuan, 1977). Thus, a 'place' can range from a small corner of a room to a geographic region like Alberta.

In this chapter, the respondents use the term 'place' to describe a variety of spaces. Sometimes, it is used to denote particular types of natural environments with specific features such as deserts, boreal forests, and mountains. Other times, 'place' is used to describe countries, cities and/or regional areas the respondents had visited, ran in,

trained in, and/or participated in outdoor recreational activities. During the interviews, the racing environment for the 2002 CDR was often referred to as 'Grande Cache and its surroundings' or 'the Death Trail and its surrounding environments.' As the proceeding chapters revealed, the recollection of a place was very often intertwined with the recollection of an event. This factor made it hard to differentiate whether the respondents were describing the event or the place itself. Understanding that place provides a context for an event, the analysis of the data was premised on the notion that an event could neither be independent of a place nor vice versa. Thus, the recollection of an event was also taken to be one with the place where the event occurred.

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the pre-race questionnaire and the post-race interviews regarding how the respondents' related to the places where they had trained or competed. The respondents spoke mainly about the places where they had run, raced, and/or engaged in other physical activities and those that had become special to them. As well, the respondents also revealed their recollections of these places, their reasons for wanting to return to them, and their ways of caring for them. The insights gained from this chapter reveal how the respondents perceived the places that they felt were special.

6.2. Place Identity and Place Dependence

In the pre-race questionnaire, respondents were asked to identify some of their favourite trails and to provide reasons for their selection. The answers to the first part of the question were varied and numerous, reflecting the respondents' diversity of experiences. From the trails in the Canadian Rocky Mountains (Canmore) to the river

valley of Medicine Hat, most trails selected by the respondents were either accessible via a short walk/car ride, or a two-to-five-hour plane or car ride. The trails in Canada included the river-valley trails in Calgary, Edmonton and Medicine Hat as well as those found in Jasper National Park (i.e., Overlander Trail), Grouse Mountain (Vancouver), Mount Hamel (Grande Cache), Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area (45 minutes from Edmonton), Fish Creek Provincial Park (Calgary), and 3 Mile Lake (St Paul). The three trails outside of Canada were a trail in the Drakesberg Mountains of South Africa, a trail in Kawaii (Hawaii) by the ocean, and a trail used for the Marathon De Sables in the Sahara desert of Morocco. Despite the diversity of favourite places, the respondents' reasons for returning to them were quite similar.

One of the more common reasons for respondents listing a trail as their favourite was connected with the notion of 'challenge.' Many respondents emphasized their preference for places that were comfortably challenging (tough, but still manageable with good effort) and had varying terrain and surfaces (such as gravel, rocky beds, and tree roots). Another reason for returning to a trail was its setting. Scenic places tended to attract more repeat visitations. Tigger's reasons for returning to her favourite trail on Mont-Aux-Sources in South Africa reflected a combination of the two: "Comfortable distance to race over, combined with spectacular scenery, challenge of climbing and descending a mountain, variety of trail underfoot—dirt road, hiking trail and open grassland."

Another feature that prompted the respondents to return to a favourite area was a place's accessibility and affordability. The respondents had made repeated visits to places that were conveniently accessible. Sometimes, repeated visits made a place special to a

respondent. For example, Python commented, "My favourite trail is Overlander via Valley of the Five Lakes (Jasper). Spent lots of time guiding around the mountains. The trails in and around Jasper are my favourite." Having spent a considerable amount of time in the area, Python illustrated the notion of a place 'growing' on an individual as time in and exposure to it increased.

The questionnaires indicated that the respondents had visited many favourite places about three to five times a week, and three to 150 times in all. LaGazelle visited her favourite trail annually. Unlike many of the respondents, LaGazelle fell in love with her favourite trail during her first visit there. Thus, she returned to it annually because of the love and attachment she felt for it. According to her, desert environments were her favourite race sites because of the connection she felt with the land:

I love running in the Sahara Desert, in Morocco, Africa. I have always felt a calling to go to Africa. I did not get there until my late 30s'...and I fell in love. I love the desert, I love the sun, I love the people there, I love the simplicity of life.

The 'calling' that LaGazelle described spoke strongly of her affinity for desert landscapes. In 'falling in love' with the place, LaGazelle affirmed that those desert landscapes were very much a part of her, as she was a part of them. This concept of attachment was best explained when LaGazelle was asked about her feelings during her runs in the desert:

For me, the Sahara is a spiritual experience. I am absolutely, spiritually wrapped up in that race because I love the desert, I love the barrenness, I love the heat, I love the sun, I love the experience, I love the desert, I love camels, everything. It is to me, if you were to believe in reincarnation, I would believe that that used to be my former home. Like I felt at home at that race.

LaGazelle was actually the only respondent who identified an internalization of a place as a reason that drew her back to her favourite area. Other respondents, however, pointed

out accessibility, affordability, challenge, repeated visits, and beautiful scenery as features that made particular trails especially attractive for them.

Sometimes, it was the absence of crowds in a place that made trails special. For example, in describing one of his favourite trail 45 minutes outside of Edmonton, Moose Bait, wrote: "Near Edmonton, Blackfoot Provincial Recreation area [has] 85 km of trails with few people." The absence of crowds in a place was a noted trait for Moose Bait. Being away from crowds and the relative isolation were likely to provide some sense of solitude for individuals like Moose Bait, who enjoyed getting away from the hustle and bustle of city living and seeking solitude in nature. Although not explicitly mentioned, the ability to find solitude when on their favourite trails was also an attractive factor for three other respondents.

Many of the respondents' reasons for returning to their favourite trails involved reasons associated with place dependence. For example, many of the trails were favourite places because of the challenges, scenery, accessibility, affordability, and 'privacy' the trails afforded to the respondents. These issues have been linked to place dependency in the outdoor resource context (Jacob & Schreyer, 1980). With the exception of LaGazlle, who returned because of her connection to the desert, the other respondents repeated visits to their favourite places more as a result of dependence, versus identifying with it. Thus, the majority of favourite places picked by the respondents came about as a result of the place having met their immediate needs, rather than their ability to 'connect' or identify with it. Keeping in mind the dynamic nature of place identity and place dependency, it would be reasonable to argue that many of the respondents' attachments to a place were initially based mainly on place dependence, rather than place identity.

6.3 Recollection of Place

Throughout the interviews, the respondents were asked to share their feelings towards their racing environments and, in particular, the environment of the 2002 CDR. The respondents were also asked to compare these feelings to similar feelings evoked in other situations and to share their thoughts on some of the other places that were important to them.

The first subsection below presents a compilation of the thoughts on places they had visited for reasons such as work, visiting family or friends, or pursuing leisure activities such as vacationing, sightseeing, hiking, and biking. Here, these places will be termed 'general spaces.' The second subsection below presents the respondents' thoughts on the places where they had run in competitions. Comparing the two kinds of places and noting the reasons why general spaces differed from racing environments may help to explain the influence of competition on the respondents' relation to places.

6.3.1 Recollections of general places.

Only one respondent expressed his disappointment about the places he had been to, while the other respondents demonstrated their positive treatment of places they had gone to. Many respondents consciously chose to experience a place as positively as they could. For example, LaGazelle remarked:

Every time I go to a different place. Every place is special. Every place has its own environment that I enjoy and remember and what I try and do is to actually take a moment and try to turn it into a snap shot. So what I will do is I will focus really hard. This is beautiful and I like who I am here and I like how I feel here and so I will take a snap shot with my mind and I will remember the smells, the look, I will remember what I am hearing and I will just breathe it and put it in my mind so that I can bring it back anytime and sometimes what will happen too, is that I will smell a smell, just completely out of the blue and it will take me back to

that snapshot because it will remind me like the smell will remind me, or something that I hear will remind me of a particular environment, whether it is in Japan or the desert. And that is really neat too, that just [out of] the blue, it will right away bring you back to somewhere else.

A well-travelled person who has lived and worked in a number of countries around the world, LaGazelle was able to explain in detail how she related to places. By relating with all her senses to every place that she had gone to, LaGazelle internalized each place that she was in, making it a part of herself. Moreover, LaGazelle's comments also illustrated the idea of positive self-identity. She was able to focus on the 'good' of a place, because she also felt good about herself within it. Cheetah also revealed this connection between positive self-identity and the significance of a place. In describing his experiences in troubled states around the world during his time in the military, Cheetah commented:

7 Through working in the military, there were obviously bad memories of places. I was over in the Gulf War so I was over in Kuwait, Nicosia, when it gained its independence, the Golan Heights, Cyprus, Namibia, when it got its independence but even those were bad times...but they were good times. Because I learnt a lot, about me and about the world, and how people act and react and find that I am fairly forgiving and I do not take a lot personally because I see how good we have it in Canada.

Cheetah chose to remember the good along with the bad of the places where he had witnessed violence and warfare. 'Internalizing' his experience of a place from a very different perspective from that of LaGazelle, Cheetah indicated that the places where he had learnt more (about himself) and grew from his experience of being there tended to stand out for him. Other respondents also expressed this idea that a place was important for them because they associated it with their positive self-identity.

Novel/rare incidents that had occurred in a place also became reasons why some respondents remembered it. Describing a run with her brother at Goat Creek Trail in Canmore, Cedar explained, "Well I have good memories. I ran in full moon with my

brother. When I go back there, I will be back to that moment with my brother, you know." Spending time with her brother and performing a somewhat conventional activity under unique conditions allowed Cedar to associate Goat Creek trail with the period of time that she had spent with her brother. Running with one's brother under a full moon could be considered a rather 'novel' occurrence.

Some respondents, however, found that familiarity with a place tended to make it special for them. When asked how he had developed a love for the places he had travelled to, Old Smokey focused on his frequency of visits:

I think a lot of the places that you travel to, especially as a tourist, you know, you are there and you stop at viewpoints and you look, and you like it. You know if you venture a little off the beaten trail, but you know you are there just to see things and seeing some of that place, you are not there for very long....Some of the places that I have attachment to, for example on Vancouver Island, my family goes there quite often. We become attached to Vancouver Island, part of the seashore and the camp, again because we become familiar with that and stray a little bit off the beaten trail, and associate memories with that. You just have to allow yourself to do that. Just that this particular event became so intense and the challenges that you have to overcome, that etches in your mind so much more.

Old Smokey felt that familiarity with a place enhanced its significance for him. An idea expressed in Chapter IV provides a reason for this belief. In this chapter, some respondents described foreign environments while making references to their homes. When one becomes familiar with a place, one is likely to be able to relate to it in more than one way. Like our living spaces, which we know intimately, a familiar place can sometimes create a feeling of 'home.' According to the theories of Ittelson et al. (1976), knowledge of a place can give its users a sense of control, because they know 'everything' about the place. Control over a space is likely to allow one to form a 'connection' to it, because if one knows where 'everything' is within a space, situations can be manipulated to achieve desired outcomes. Driven by a human need for control

(Heckhausen & Schulz, 1995), one is therefore likely to feel safer and more relaxed in familiar surroundings than in unfamiliar surroundings. Thus, while novel occurrences tend to contribute to making a place stand out for some individuals, repeat visitations to an area can also result in familiarity and, eventually stand out for some individuals as well.

Old Smokey's statement above also suggested that the places that the respondents' remembered well were those where good experiences had occurred with loved ones, family members, and good friends. Sometimes, these places also stood out because of the formation of new friendships or because of meeting the local people and enjoying their hospitality. For example, when Python was asked to name a special place to which he would like to return, his reply reflected how this social aspect could contribute to a place's uniqueness:

I would say Laos. Yeah...Just the people, I do not know. It is beautiful. People are really nice. I do not know. I sea-kayaked the Mekong River Valley from the Chinese border all the way down and yeah, just so impressed. I think if there was any place in the world, I would pack up and leave, that is where I will find a place...Laos. Find a nice place and call it a life.

Python was really impressed by the beauty of the land and the friendliness of its people. The hospitality of the local people made the place special—to the extent where he would be ready to pack up and 'retire' in Laos, if time and opportunity permitted. Other respondents expressed similar sentiments about their own special places.

The places that stood out for most respondents were places where a positive experience had taken place or where they had felt good about themselves. Sometimes, good memories of interactions with family, friends, and strangers, and of places where the respondents 'felt at home' also contributed to making places special. Finally, a place

where the respondents had novel experiences and/or significant events had taken place also made a place special. While this notion of 'special places' is evident in the concept of place attachment, the degree of attachment may vary. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to conclude that the respondents were more likely to form attachments to the areas that they had travelled through if they had experienced any of the above factors.

6.3.2 Recollection of race locations.

The places travelled through when engaged in a race, such as the 2002 CDR, would likely be experienced very differently than places where people engage in more leisurely activities. For example, Chapter V demonstrated that the experience of the 2002 CDR was one of focusing on overcoming the unexpected obstacles and finishing the race within the time allotted. However, although some respondents considered enjoyment of the environment as a bonus, others considered the environment to be the central element in their whole experience. Focused on one main objective (i.e., to complete the race), the respondents' relation to place was also affected by the added stresses, pressure, and competition.

This subsection highlights how the respondents related to the places that they had raced in, either in past races or in the 2002 CDR. While most of these places were environments where foot races were held, some were related to sport events like hockey and slo-pitch games and triathlons. Many respondents remembered bits and pieces of their racing environment, while the rest remained a blur. Tigger expressed her 'frustration' while trying to understand why she had the ability to complete a long route but not to remember an entire race:

I was thrilled that it had not rained and that it was so pretty and I just...one of the first things I said to Mike and Kelly, "We have got to come back here for a week~~end~~. Just spend more time just in going through everything." And I wanted to write everything down, because somethings are so clear and vivid straightaway that I have lost in between. You know, the next day I just reminiscing and "Gee, I remember this along here and I remember..." and now really, a lot of that comes or fades or even, now when I ...I will go back next year just to see it again.

Tigger illustrated a tendency of many of the respondents, which was to remember only key moments of the race and not the entire course. The partial memories provided insights as to how respondents recalled their experiences in situations of stress, pressure and competition.

Many places that the respondents felt stood out for them during the competition were those where novel experiences occurred (Chapter V). Highlights like running across a big puddle of water, and observing the snow at the top of the summits were particularly memorable for respondents. Novelty in a race can come in many ways. Whether it was the occurrence of a rare event that a racer has not previously experienced or simply the reputation of a race (i.e., a race that is either popular with the masses or reputable and prestigious within the running circuit) gives one a feeling of novelty, these feelings may enable a race/place to stand out from other similar races/places. In his recollection of the races that stood out for him, Cheetah described the ones that had been held in some interestingly unique locations:

Boston Marathon, just because it is Boston. New York marathon for the exact same reasons. The marathon in Egypt, just because running to the Great Pyramids was just a kick, I mean it is so huge that you see it for the whole race and you never get to it. Same thing with Vegas, running down doing the Vegas marathon. Toronto marathon, because it was so bloody cold. It was a good thing I was a little guy, again just like what we all went through. July in Toronto, fly out there, humid as 40 °C and in two days, it went down to 2 °C and all I had was a singlet and short and I ran behind, finish fourth, and I ran behind the guys who were bigger than me to break the wind because it was too darn cold!

Cheetah remembered particular races very vividly because of their unique landscapes, racing conditions, and novel situations. Many of the races that he described above had been held in cities that have a distinctive aesthetic. Well-known, cosmopolitan, and vibrant cities like Boston and New York are already cities on the travel wish lists of many people, both within and outside of North America. These cities' marathons¹⁸ are world-famous, and for respondents like Cheetah, their fame contributed to the uniqueness of their race. The novelty of a race in Egypt and Las Vegas was also likely to be attributed to the settings and the features of the race location. In the case of the Toronto marathon, the cold weather that had occurred unexpectedly probably attributed to Cheetah's memory of the race. Old Smokey's claim that hockey arenas are all the 'same' supported the argument that novelty makes a racing environment memorable. When asked if a particular place stood out for him during his hockey-playing days, Old Smokey was unable to think of one:

I do not think that there is any place that I would particularly think of. Playing hockey, since you are on the ice, it does not matter where the arena is or whatever, the game takes place on the ice. You got two nets and lines and all that, you are okay.

Commenting on the similarity between hockey arenas, Old Smokey highlighted the importance of a space's aesthetics. His remarks indicated why a race held in an outdoor natural environment tends to stand out in the racers' memories: no two natural areas are exactly alike. The weather, animals, and human interference make natural areas different from one another even though they may exist in the same region and have similar flora and fauna. An area's exposure to the natural elements changes it every

¹⁸ The Boston Marathon requires that its participants attain a certain standard in their running times. The organizers impose a quota on the number of participants, who required to have a personal best running time of under 4 hours, which may also make this race stand out for many because completing it could be a huge achievement.

second. Another possible reason why the respondents remembered natural racing environments could be the intense interactions that they had with their surroundings. Some respondents felt that the toughest challenges such as those presented by injuries allowed them to have a stronger 'connection' with a particular place. Having to interact intimately with the surroundings by, for example, having to learn to 'read' trail conditions, to adjust one's running technique, and to understanding cloud patterns to predict the weather fostered some level of connection to the race site. For Old Smokey, an intimate connection with the environment of the Death Trail was inevitable because of the level of interaction he had with it:

But you can really become more involved in a certain location for example, by going on a race like that [2002 CDR]. Really feel that it becomes a part of you, you feel that you have this close relationship with it, it is more of a personal thing. You can have all these different thoughts and memories of how you were feeling there, what you saw, or talked to or what the weather was like. All of those things are very detailed in your mind, plus the fact that this being a positive experience, I think we associate that too. I think that may be it.

When his batteries of his headlamp 'died' on him, Old Smokey had to negotiate his way down from Mt Hamel in the dark. Adjusting his footing appropriately to accommodate the icy and slippery trail conditions, looking ahead to ensure that he was on the right course route, and ensuring that he was dressed appropriately provided him opportunities to interact with his environment. It was these moments that brought Old Smokey closer to the place. His comments also revealed how thoughts and activities can be important while being in a place. Identifying with and depending on a specific place, individuals can potentially 'connect' in many ways with a place because of their memories of what they were feeling, thinking and doing while they were in the place. This kind of connection to a place is an example of the 'emotional' aspect of place attachment. The evoking of

feelings, taking a person back to a particular time when he/she was within a place, may also explain how a sense of intimacy and connection with the environment can be formed. Python described this process when asked if running within natural environments gave him a closer connection to nature:

You do...I run half urban for 2 kilometres and I am in the River Valley. I was doing a 10 km loop and running with my son this morning. You know, back going up McKinnon Ravine and turn around at 7.30 a.m. in the morning and the sun is coming up by the water of the river, you are halfway up, living within a million people and there is not a soul to be seen. Seeing the sun over the river valley, you see deer, you see coyotes, you see animals fitting in with our ecosystem and it is cool to see it.

In describing his experience of running in the Edmonton river valley, Python revealed his feelings of intimacy with the natural surroundings during his run. Seeing coyotes, deer, and the sun and experiencing solitude gave him an intimate contact with the natural space around him. Although many respondents did not explicitly express the idea of having an intimate experience of a place through a run, those who did also expressed a desire to see and experience a place through a run. Given this, one might think that not completing a race would have made a respondent indifferent about the race location, since the respondents all showed their tenacity and determination to succeed at their tasks. The following discussion reveals why this expectation would have been inaccurate, as the respondents differentiated their experience of an event from their experience of its space.

None of the respondents viewed the race's location negatively, even if they had not performed as well as they had wanted to or had not managed to complete the race. When asked if finishing the race would have given her a different impression of Grande Cache and its surroundings, Bear Scare replied:

If I would have finished? No. I do not think so. I think that it is...like I have been back to Grande Cache three times now in the last three months. For training camp,

again this summer and I love it. I tend...a place tends to grow on me the more I go, so you know what, I love Grande Cache. I think it is a beautiful, beautiful place even though I did not achieve my goal. There are no bad feelings, you know, I love it. I mentioned to go back. My husband and I talked about going back, if not for the Death Race, then we will do some camping and some mountain biking out there and beautiful. It has that draw for us.

The respondents who had not completed the race all expressed similar feelings and had no ill feelings against the race location or the race organizers. The respondents took a very responsible attitude towards their failure to perform. They stated that a badly organized race, would not have given them a bad impression of a particular place. Other respondents also expressed this ability to differentiate, but from another perspective. Python, a three-time repeat participant in the Death Run, made this point clearly and concisely:

My personal impression of what the first Death Race was all about to what it went this year, is very different. And I mean I would personally tell people not to do the race. I would tell them to go to Grande Cache, go kayaking and quading and go horseback riding, choose a variety of different things but I would not send one guy on that race.

Python's disappointment with the race organizers did not affect the way he viewed the areas of Grande Cache and the Death Trail. However, although perception of a badly organized race or a disappointing race performance did not affect the respondents' impression of their racing environments, a well-organized race positively affected some other respondents' attachment to place. When asked how she would have viewed the area of Grande Cache or parts of the Death trail had she not completed her run, Cedar replied that she would have blamed herself and no one else for having given up.

All the disappointment would have been on my shoulders because everything there was just phenomenal. Everything was just so well organized, the volunteers were phenomenal and the trails were so well thought out, just the way that they routed out of the course having like an easy leg really 1,3 and 5 and 2 and 4 being the hard legs, just everything about it is awesome. You come into town after the

second leg and you are kind of back in the city for a moment and yeah, I would definitely not think of anything different, anything negative against the race, or Grande Cache, I would just be really disappointed with myself.

Impressed by the race organizers and the race process, Cedar had the same ability as Bear Scare and Python to separate poor race experiences from her views on place. This ability is rather interesting in relation to the notion that positive race experiences were associated to place while negative race experiences were separated from the experience of place. Perhaps, the respondents viewed the event as the challenge and main issue, and the place itself as either a space for the challenge or a background that was irrelevant to the whole experience of the event. Generally, a recollection of a particular space is intertwined with the event/ activities that occurred within it, so the above finding could be an interesting future research topic.

When additional stress, pressure and competition are present, the factors that made a place stand out for the respondents differed very little. While the 'staples' of 'special' places were novel experiences, unique challenges, beautiful scenery, and 'exotic' locations, much of the 'local' touch was likely to have come from the race organizers, as opposed to the local townspeople. When the race organizers had put on a good race, some respondents tended to associate the race's success with its place. When the respondents were dissatisfied with race organizers, the respondents did not associate the race's space with their dissatisfaction. As well, the respondents' also revealed that their inability to achieve their goals in a race would not have affected their experience of the race's location. Therefore, in contrast to the popular belief that athletes tend to have a bad impression of a place where they have lost major competitions, the respondents who were disappointed with their performances still felt positively about the place itself.

Thus, the respondents were able to develop an attachment to a place where they did not perform well in a competition. Grande Cache was able to retain its uniqueness and attraction for the respondents despite their failure to achieve their competitive goals.

6.4 Reasons for Returning

The desire to return to a place is indicative of a few aspects of place attachment. Firstly, in order for individuals to want to return to a place, they are likely to have evaluated their prior experiences of it positively. Secondly, the place probably met some of their needs if they want to return to it. Thirdly, if the place met their needs reasonably well, then their feelings for the place could also be bringing them back into the area again. Given that one of the manifestations of place attachment is the desire of an individual to return to a place, is an expressed desire to return a confirmation of place attachment?

How does the experience of place contribute to the desire to return to it? As Williams et al. (1992) have pointed out, individuals' desire to return to a place can be associated with the way (i.e., the mode) in which they have experienced a place. The three main modes involve the settings, the social aspects and the activities; accordingly, a place can be experienced through its settings, a social event, or an activity. As well, Marcus (1992) has suggested that places where people have achieved a significant feat will also be special to them.

This section presents the respondents' reasons for returning to racing environments such as Grande Cache. In the pre-race questionnaire, seven out of eight respondents who had been to the Grande Cache area before (either for previous Death

Runs or for the training camp) indicated their enthusiasm about returning to the town to spend time exploring the trails, camping, and hiking. After the race, all the respondents indicated their desire to return, albeit for different reasons.

6.4.1 The social aspects: Local residents.

One reason why the respondents wanted to return to Grande Cache was due to the people they had met there, either during the race or as a result of the race. Ten out of 11 of the respondents had no relatives in Grande Cache (the exception being Old Smokey), so the friends that the respondents made in town during their short stay were probably associated with the race. After the race, Cheetah, who had never been to Grande Cache before the 2002 CDR, expressed his great love for the town:

I would go back to Grande Cache tomorrow just to go to Grande Cache. I had that good a time there and what makes Grande Cache a lovely place are the people that I met from within the town. Definitely, it was not the scenery that I saw, as you know, you were there, we did not really see the mountains the whole time we were there, and it was cold and yukky and rainy and...so...I like to go back to see Grande Cache just for the scenery but no [not entirely], we made some, my wife and I made some incredible friends. People who have e-mailed us since we have been back, they gave us gifts before we left. I am a fairly social person and running has always been a social thing for me, even though I made money out of it. Yeah, Grande Cache is a wonderful town, yeah nothing but good memories about it. Even though the race was so desperately tough, Grande Cache, I love that town, period.

Having made friends with the townspeople, Cheetah remarked that they would draw him back to the place again. Cheetah's comments speak to a number of issues raised throughout this chapter. First, the experience had to have been positive to a certain extent (Cheetah had a good time in Grande Cache), and second, his successful performance of the race may also have enhanced his positive experience of the place. A reoccurring pattern, the respondents' explanations of how they related to the places that they had run

in seemed to have little to do with it when they had performed poorly at a race. The respondents who had a poor performance demonstrated an ability to separate their experience of the race from that of the place. For example, LaGazelle explained the factors that would draw her back to Grande Cache again:

Well, the Death Race, it is bringing me back to where I want to finish. I stayed at the Bed and Breakfast [B&B] where I met the wonderful woman that ran the B&B, so I really want to see her again. And her next day neighbour, she was a woman that was running and she had me over for supper so it is the people that are bringing me back, it is the race that is bringing me back. The environments, I love the mountains... So yeah, I love the mountains, I love the people and I want to finish the race. Those are the key things.

Although LaGazelle did not want to return to Grande Cache only because of its social aspects, her comments still reflect the three modes listed by Williams et al. (1992). Although she had not completed the 2002 CDR, she wanted to return because of the activity, the settings and the people. The other respondents who had not completed the race also expressed similar sentiments. However, did the respondents' ability to separate their experience of a race and a place undermine the notion that they could experience the place of a race only through a foot race?

6.4.2 The activity aspects: Running.

Not only the social aspect gave the respondents a desire to return to Grande Cache; some also wanted to return to accomplish their goal of finishing the race and to perform the same activity again.

In the interviews, some of the respondents said that the running was their main reason for their desire to return to Grande Cache. They wanted to attempt the 'feat' one more time, and those who already managed to complete it wanted to return to better their

previous records. Moose Bait, with his 'insider's' information on the running community who had taken part in all three Death Runs, related the following about the relay teams who had returned to Grande Cache year after year:

They go back year after year after year and cannot wait. Like the Running Edge team who finished second this year but they held the record for the last two years, they just cannot say enough good things about Grande Cache. The women's team with Patria, they won again this year. Four out of five women came back this year, one got married, so she...heehheee...the mixed team which have got more friends of mine, they have...every year, they have basically been the same team. And they keep on coming back. Okay, it's like can I go a little faster...and they know the area too...Yeah, because they know and some of the relay teams what they do is they run a different leg every year so it takes them five years to do all the legs. (Moose Bait)

Moose Bait's explanation of why his friends on the relay teams return to Grande Cache indicated that they and the solo participants had similar reasons for returning annually. The above comments suggest that many of the race participants came back year after year because of the good time they had with their friends in Grande Cache and also because of their ambition to complete the Death Trail. Karakonte, for example, stated that he was going back to attempt the Death Trail until he 'got it'.

Same thing with the Grande Cache thing, because it is such a high enormous feat, I have to do it. And I will train again. Like Bruce, there are other people who aspire me too...because he is 64 years old and still doing it. I am 55 and still have 9 more years to go back to Grande Cache and once I do it, I probably will not go back there again, I will think of it but I do not know...maybe I will go for the 100 milers, but...

Like his friend, Bruce, a 64-year-old runner who decided to attempt the Death Run after he was diagnosed as having a brain aneurysm, Karakonte also intended to keep returning to Grande Cache until he completed the race. His aspirations suggest the idea of 'dependence', which involves the need to overcome difficult challenges. Karakonte's drive to complete a 'feat' like the Death Run implied his need to face difficult challenges

rather than his affinity for a particular place. Karakonte was the only respondent who indicated the notion of a 'been there, done that' mentality.

6.4.3 *The setting aspects: Scenery.*

In the interviews, no respondent mentioned a desire to return solely for the scenery. Often, the respondents wanted to return because of a combination of elements. Several respondents said that they wanted to return to Grande Cache to engage in other outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, camping, quading,¹⁹ and mountain biking. Violet wanted to return because of the combination of the townspeople and the settings. When asked to describe her first impression of Grande Cache, Violet stated: "I did not know Grande Cache before I was at the training camp, so I had no clue. But they were like nice, very friendly people there, very...yeah. Everything. They were very friendly." While her first impression of the area seemed to be based on the townspeople, Violet combined her desire to see them again with another reason for wanting to return to Grande Cache, after having stayed in the town twice: "Yeah, definitely. Beautiful country, friendly people...." For her, the people and the settings and the activities that one could engage in there made them want to return. As well, some respondents also wanted to return to Grande Cache to engage in social activities. While most respondents offered a combination of reasons why they wanted to return to Grande Cache, Jo had the most encompassing reason. When asked, "Do you have a desire to return to Grande Cache?" Jo promptly answered, "Yes, I love everything about it!" She later elaborated on the town's one feature that was particularly important to her. When asked if she would get excited if she heard somebody talking about Grande Cache, Jo answered, "I think so.

¹⁹ 'Quading' is the activity of travelling around on an all-terrain vehicle (ATV).

Yeah, just because I really like that place. It kind of reminds me of St Paul." Providing another reason why the respondents wanted to return to Grande Cache, Jo felt strongly that the town reminded her of her home—a classic example of place attachment. Her feeling suggested she had a strong place identity for Grande Cache and not a dependence on it.

While many of the respondents expressed their desire to return to Grande Cache either for the next race or for a vacation, some indicated that other places could replace the settings and atmosphere of a place like Grande Cache, even as suitable locations to host a race like the Death Run. When asked if they would feel strange if the Death Run were held in another location, many of them expressed little disapproval. They believed that the Death Race could be held in any town with adequate amenities and trails providing suitable challenges. Old Smokey suggested that Grande Cache would be difficult to replace as the site for the Death Race: "Grande Cache is an ideal setting that would be difficult to match. It has the perfect terrain, as well as adequate infrastructure in town, and a great volunteer force to draw from." Old Smokey seemed to recognise, rather reluctantly, that although the role played by Grande Cache for the Death Race would be hard to match, Grande Cache was still replaceable, should another town with similar characteristics be found. Unlike Old Smokey, the other respondents seemed to agree with Bear Scare, who believed that Grande Cache would be easy to replace:

I guess I do not attach to things that much, like it is a goal that I have yet to complete, but no, not attached, personally I am not attached to it. I am proud of the fact that we did the race, and that will always be a special memory. Grande Cache will always hold that special memory but I am not really attached to the trail or...because you find that in so many places, like I just...right out of the back of our doors...

In her statement, Bear Scare raised the idea of special places but also indicated that because of Grande Cache's rather ordinary setting, other settings could be successfully substituted. If another town had trails as long and challenging as those of the Death Trail and also had sufficient accommodations to put up the participants in the race, an event like the Death Race could take place anywhere. Although Bear Scare's experience of the race was based on a combination of the settings of the place (the Death Trail) and the atmosphere created by the noise and enthusiasm of the spectators and the volunteers, her thoughts on moving the Death Run to another location focused only on the settings. However, without the presence of an enthusiastic crowd (the townspeople) and volunteers (more townspeople), the settings of the Death Run would be easily replaceable, but its atmosphere could not be duplicated.

This section has shown that the respondents' had different reasons for wanting to return to Grande Cache, but they still could be categorized into dimensions relating to the settings, the social aspects, and the activities. Although all the respondents expressed a desire to return, many still felt that the role Grande Cache plays in an event like the Death Run was still easily replaceable. While this section seems to suggest that the respondents had not formed place attachment, the bigger picture that emerged from the findings presented below, suggesting that perhaps some sort of attachment was formed during this process of running through a particular space. However, this attachment was not what is traditionally thought of as 'place attachment.'

6.5 Respecting and Caring: The Ethic of Care in Relation to Places

Place attachment is sometimes also manifested when individuals express an ethic of care for the places they are attached to (Tuan, 1977). Termed as 'geopiety', the act of 'giving back' and 'protecting,' a place of attachment is a natural extension that results from one's attachment to place. When respecting a place of attachment, an individual often holds this place in reverence and tries to ensure that its uniqueness is preserved. In caring for a place of attachment, an individual often tries to ensure that the place is well maintained and protected from any external influences that might harm it.

In this section, the respondents' methods of 'giving back' and 'protecting' a place are discussed. The 'place' was defined as either the environs of the Death Trail (which included the town of Grande Cache) or the other places where the respondents had raced. In the context of this definition, the respondents manifested their respect and care for the place differently. One respondent conceptualised respect for 'place' as being humble when immersed in natural areas. This feeling, in turn, motivated respondents to train well for their races, as Moose Bait noted:

I consider myself a fairly smart runner in terms that I am not willing to take stupid risks. Like the risks I take are very calculated. You know like I do the training and I know what my body can do and I know the surroundings. For something like the Death Race, I would not go in if I had not been training because it is stupid. Where as people may think that I am stupid, I do not think I am stupid, I am prepared. You have to have respect for the course, you have to respect it, because if you do not respect it, it can hurt you. And even if you do respect it, it will hurt you.

By understanding the roughness and the harshness of the terrain, Moose Bait realized that those who did not prepare themselves adequately (and thus acknowledging the might of nature) for races like the Death Run were likely to have a hard time. For many other respondents, respect for an area was also manifested in this way.

The respondents expressed their care for places such as the Death Trail in several ways. At the micro level, most respondents expressed their understanding that they would not litter the trail or dirty it in any way. In fact, some respondents were willing to pick up rubbish along the way, even if doing so slowed them down. However, Karakonte's desire to do so was thwarted by his injury:

Oh yes, yes and I really do [respect the trail] and what I really was surprised about and...and everybody...there was what? About 300 people on the that trail, even though it was muddy and slushy in many places, everybody kept it clean and respectful, there were a few who left the garbage, and I wanted to pick up a bit but I could not, it hurt too much.

Already in pain and being unable to bend, Karakonte decided not to pick up the garbage that he saw. However, like the other respondents, he took extra care not to litter. Thus, for all the respondents, care at the micro level consisted mainly of actions that helped to maintain the pristine nature of the trail.

On a macro level, the respondents manifested their notion of 'care' in other ways. When asked if they would do anything to 'protect' the area that they had raced through, all the respondents answered positively. However, on the macro level, three strategies emerged as caring for places that were part of a larger natural area. Several respondents expressed their willingness to help preserve the pristine beauty of the natural places that they had raced through on the Death Trail. When asked how far they were willing to go in order to help protect the natural areas around the Death Trail from possible mining and explorations activities, most respondents expressed their willingness to sign petitions. Many of these respondents, felt that action should only be taken if some development were threatening to 'spoil' the natural environment by altering habitats and destroying the surrounding areas. While some agreed to help by supporting petition drafts, the answers

of Bear Scare and Cedar indicated the range of the other respondents' answers. Bear Scare's commitment to the 'cause' depended on the circumstances: "I would definitely support a petition, to go to what extreme, I am not too sure, it will have to depend on circumstances but oh yes, I would, yes I would. Because it is gorgeous countryside." Cedar, however, seemed willing to commit 100% of her energy to saving Grande Cache's natural surroundings if necessary. Indicating her willingness to help in the cause, Cedar was asked how she would support environmental groups and if she would be willing to write a letter to the MP. To this, she replied:

Yeah, if they were going to ruin the environment by clear cutting it out, I would not like that...I think I will go to the race director to just kind of find out and ask them and if they were...because I have so much respect for them, if they wanted help, I would be in there 100%...I think I would e-mail to see if there is anything I can do...I am not good at writing letters but I will try, I mean I rather sign something than actually write it but that is all because of me.

Cedar revealed her high level of commitment to protect a place. Bear Scare expressed a similar level of commitment, but only under specific circumstances. Variation in the levels of attachment to place can result in different kinds of outcomes and Bear Scare's and Cedar's different levels of commitment are prime examples.

Moreover, the respondents also expressed their care for the place in other ways, including an unwillingness to support petitions if mining, logging and oil and gas activities become a reality in the environments around the Death Trail. For Python, Moose Bait, and Karakonte, not supporting petitions protesting the presence of such activities was their way of extending care to a place. Perceiving people as part of the place, Python, Moose Bait, and Karakonte felt these developmental activities were inevitable and also possibly good for the town and its people. These three respondents

expressed fairly similar views about showing support for the people who lived in what they considered to be a special place:

You know what, there are already clear cuts up there. From Hamel, you can see some clear cuts and it is a fact of life. The land is so rough that there is only so much development like in terms of housing and stuff that could go up in some of those areas and that is really just a fact of life unless someone wants to spend an awful lot of money because like this, like this <gestures his hand showing how impractical it was to clear cut trees on extremely steep terrains> (Moose Bait)

Moose Bait's idea of 'smart development' was really the idea of balance—striking a balance between development and preservation of what was necessary for future uses. Python extended this idea, feeling that decisions about development should be taken by the people who will be affected by it and not by outsiders like himself:

People have to work, it is easy for me to say. You cannot destroy their livelihood or a community basically can be destroyed and be a ghost town. I mean the mine closes, and the prison closes and everything else around there, all of a sudden, pulp prices keeps going up and all of a sudden, clear cutting is viable to do, well it is a whole new community, basically too large for themselves. My personal belief is that there has to be a balance between environmentalist doing their checks and stuff and ensure that the environment is protected and there is a balance...I think with a community like Grande Cache, I think it needs that. With the seismic activity going up there, it is, like the next four years, I think the area around is going to change, it is going to be rigs, stuffed up on the sides of the hill, going to be clear cutting out there but then Grande Cache will have to ultimately decide, if they want to reap more work, if they do not want big pay checks, big sub-urbans [sport utility vehicles or the likes of it] and do not want to make fast cash, if they want to find a balance. Eventually, I think the environment will suffer, it always does.

Python, Moose Bait and Karakonte thought extending care to the places that stood out for them meant allowing the people involved to decide what kind of future they wanted. The respondents also expressed their care for the places they had raced through and had some form of attachment to by taking an interest in what was taking place in a region and/or in its nation itself, and by trying to help alleviate a problem if possible. For LaGazelle, her own quest to cross the Sahara desert resulted from the time she had spent

racing in the desert and also from her heightened sense of awareness of the regional problems in Africa:

I am not too sure if I have told you that I am doing a camel trek alone in the Sahara? And I am going back one more time to do this race and three years from now, I am circling the Sahara and it will be the first time, it will be a world record that it has been gone back and forth [circumnavigated]. It will take me two years and I am doing that...to give back to Africa because Africa has given to me. I am raising money for Aids to help people in Africa and this is how I feel I am giving back to the country because the country has given me a sort of spirituality and I want to give back to the country in doing so because I love the people that I have met there, they are so wonderful. I feel that it is what I am doing, ... for the people that live in the areas that I have passed.

LaGazelle's way of extending her ethic of care to a place where she had 'found herself' was by helping to alleviate the regional problems of an area which she had grown to love and strongly identify with. Attempting an expedition of such proportions is a dramatic way of giving back to the people who have given to her. LaGazelle's comments also suggest some reasons why the respondents chose to 'give back' to some of the places that had stood out for them.

While some attributed their actions to a place's settings and unique features, the respondents attributed much of their desire to care for a place to the people whom they had met there as a result of spending time in a place for a race. Cheetah's concern about the issues facing Grande Cache arose mainly because of the people whom he had gotten to know fairly well there during the race. Although he stated clearly that the Death Race was not the cause of his friendship with the people in Grande Cache, his reason for being in the community was to participate in the race:

Yeah, I would take an interest in what goes on in Grande Cache. Not so much [as a result of] because of the death race but because of the people that I know and call friends that live there, you know, they closed the mine a couple years ago, the coal mine, it was no big deal in my life. I had never been to Grande Cache till this race and I found out that the mine will be re-hiring 40 people, I think that is a

good thing. I will now watch the news or read in the papers, if there is something about Grande Cache, I will go over that and I will notice it, again not because of the race but because of the friendships that got started there. Everything that happens in that town will now affect the people that I know and that is important to me....So that is one of the reasons and the other reason is because I truly do care about the people I have met and I hope that their lives continue and they will as people and when you have to do that, you do need some pretty basic things in life and one of them is a job...Grande Cache, I would love to see it grow and gain some strength again, I will like to see the mine open, so that the race continues.

Cheetah connected strongly with the place of Grande Cache because of the social contact he had with the townspeople. In contrast, Jo's support for petitions for preserving the natural environments around the Death Trail was more a result of running through those areas and seeing and appreciating what the place had to offer:

No. I think mostly it is because I have seen. Even here, like if they were to do that around here, I would definitely take part in a petition or something like that. And it is just that I am a country girl and I like the trees and stuff.

Her ability to 'identify' with a place, and the fact that she had seen some parts of it, were the driving forces for the actions she would take should development threaten the wilderness spaces around the Death Trail. However, while many of the respondents explained that running gave them an intimate experience of a place, they also stated that the social aspects of the place were mainly what brought them back to it. The experience of having been there and seen it was also a major reason why many of them would 'go the distance' to protect the places in which they considered special to them. Tigger expressed this kind of commitment when she was asked whether she had special feelings for the places that she had raced in:

I think I probably would... Well I try and hope that you have a special place for the places that you have gone, for the people. Those are especially my thoughts in Nepal, because it is extremely intimate as well. So it was not just the running, you have got a good feel of what the people are, got a real heart for them. And running... I do not know if it was just really the running that took us on the side, but I think that having a knowledge of the place through a run, you got that first

experience that you can almost relate to a little bit better than places that you have not been to. So yeah, I think you would, to places that you have visited.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter showed how the respondents related to the places that they had been to for leisure, for work, or for running. Their descriptions of their favourite trails showed that the respondents connected to places more in terms of dependency than identity. The ways in which they related to both general and racing environments revealed a few similarities. Generally, the places that stood out for the respondents were usually places where positive experiences, positive self-identity and/or personal growth had been experienced. As well, places where novel experiences had occurred and of which the respondents had good memories of times spent with their family or friends were also special places. The attributes that made racing environments and other environments special for the respondents were quite similar. In the latter part of this chapter, the reasons contributing to the respondents' desire to return to their racing environments were found to have resulted from the respondents' experience of the social dimension of these places. As well, many respondents also expressed their desire to return to a place in order to partake in an activity or to experience a particular setting again. Finally, the different ways that respondents gave back to the places that they had raced through were presented.

The central topic in this study, place attachment, was conceptualized as a combination of both place identity and place dependency. Throughout Chapter VI, the respondents often showed overwhelmingly that their attachment to places was a result of place dependence, rather than place identity. Given that place dependence includes issues

of accessibility and available alternative sources, the respondents' explanations for why they liked their favourite trails were a manifestation of place dependence issues concerning resources and satisfaction needs. Place identity, on the other hand, was not expressed as often. With the exception of LaGazelle, who loved her desert runs, no respondent expressed his or her internalization of a place. Place can become part of a person, but the respondents in this study exhibited the effects of their being part of a place. This latter phenomenon can also be considered to be a form of place identity, except, perhaps, a less internalized version of it. Place dependence was observed to be dominant in the Death Run experience, but seemed at times to be on par with aspects of place identity. However, given the respondents' expressed desire to return to and a willingness to contribute to the well being of the places where they had raced, the respondents did have some sense of place attachment. However, the nature of and the reason for how this connection to a place occurred are still not clear. While some respondents claimed that running gave them an intimate experience of a place, their comments did not suggest such a sense of place identity. Rather, it was the social aspects of a place that had a much larger impact for many respondents in terms of their desire to return to or to 'give back' to a place that they considered important to them.

Chapter VII

Summation, Discussion and Conclusion

People get all stressed out about money and get all stressed out about where they live, or they get all stressed out about...their vehicle, and you know what? It is not worth the power that it takes to blow it all to hell. It really is not. Because when it comes right down to it, the things that you have that are really yours are the places you have been and the people you have met. (Cheetah)

7.1. Introduction

The previous three chapters revealed the main themes that had emerged from the interviews. Although these key themes were expected, some of the details associated with them were surprising. The results have provided interesting insights into the concept of 'place attachment,' confirmed the findings of previous studies and raised new questions. This chapter provides a summary of the study findings and discusses the resulting implications. Suggestions for future research, reflections on methodology and a final note on the study are also presented.

7.2 Summaries and Discussion

This section provides a summary of the main points raised in Chapters IV, V, and VI along with a discussion of the insights gained, in relation to the literature on place.

7.2.1 Identity and place.

Humans, in a bid to distinguish themselves as individuals, tend to form self-perceptions that fit their notions of who they think they are or would like to become (Proshanky, 1978). Many of these self-perceptions are also contextualized within particular places—physical settings where individuals feel comfortable and connected. In this study, the respondents' perception of themselves as active individuals, trail runners,

and seekers of personal challenges strongly suggests their affinity for natural areas composed of varying landscapes (e.g., forests, deserts, and river valleys) and opportunities to challenge themselves. Although this affinity is not an affirmation of the respondents' attachment to natural areas, it is clear that because of their prior affinity for natural settings, they would have stronger tendencies to form an attachment to a natural area, as opposed to someone who has no inclination for such settings.

In this study, respondents tended to describe their affinity to places at different levels. Sometimes, it was on more general terms, while at other times, it was on more specific terms. The 'general' places included physical spaces with specific features, such as mountains, deserts and/or remote natural locations. The 'specific' places included places such as the town of Grande Cache, the Sahara desert in Morocco, and the Edmonton river valley.

This tendency to categorize places into 'general' and 'specific' can be explained by Rosch's (1977) theory of categorization. Accordingly, humans have a tendency to think about the objects in their everyday life in terms of a hierarchy, in order to make these objects more meaningful for themselves. Some of these objects are then categorized into 'types,' and 'tokens.' 'Types' are usually used to denote things which are more abstract or general, such as a bag, an armchair, or a truck, while 'tokens' are used to denote more specific things such as one's backpack, one's favourite armchair, or one's Ford Explorer. When it comes to places, Russell and Snodgrass (1987) suggest that humans are more likely to develop stronger emotional connections with the 'tokens' or specific places such as their neighbourhoods or their communities. In the context of this proposition, the results of this study have clearly shown that the respondents' potential

attachment to place will include different notions of 'place.' While those 'tokens' may speak of a strong bond to one particular area, those attachments to the 'types' may speak of a preference for or bonding to more generalized settings.

Another finding from Chapter IV revealed the respondents' motivations for taking part in single-discipline MLARs. These included experiencing new environments, taking on unexpected challenges with some element of risk involved and acquiring new skills. These motivations have been found to be consistent with those suggested in both sport and adventure tourism literature (Hinch & Higham, 2001; Priest & Ballie, 1987). The respondents' desire to engage in further active holidays in a competitive atmosphere also aligns well with the combined motivations of both sports and adventure tourists. Understanding the possible motivations (and thus recreational needs) of those who engage in similar races will help race organizers ensure that these needs are addressed. Participants who have their needs met will be likely to have a positive impression of the race and the race site.

7.2.2 Outdoor recreation experience, control and place.

In Chapter V, the respondents' 're-lived' experiences of the race and their preferences for control during the race were revealed. When describing their multi-phase outdoor recreation experience (Clawson & Knetch, 1966), the respondents placed strong emphasis on the anticipation, on-site experience, and recollection phases. Also revealed was the significance of the 'recollection phase' when seen from the overall adventure racing experience. The bulk of the findings in this chapter revolved around the emotional ups and downs experienced by the respondents during the actual race.

A major finding in this chapter was the disassociation between the respondents' race results that were lower than expected and enjoyment of the race. This ability to disassociate contributed to the respondents' positive experience of the 'Death Trail.' Having met their basic needs for new experiences, personal challenges, physical maintenance, and acquisition of skills during the race, the respondents expressed their satisfaction with the race experience. What is of interest here is the notion that despite the varying levels of race performances by the respondents, all of them expressed their intention to return to the race site, should time and opportunity permit. One possible explanation for the respondents' ability to maintain the distinction between the experience of the race and their race outcome is likely to be found in their motivational-orientation as an athlete.

As the findings have shown, many of the respondents expressed their preference for secondary control throughout the duration of the race. As reflected in their stated race strategies, these respondents chose to go into the event ready to adjust to the variants of the race and the environment. This type of control aligns well with the concepts describing a mastery skill orientated athlete. According to Robert and Weinberg (1994), an athlete orientated in this manner places more emphasis on skill acquisition than on the outcome of the race. This means that they may be more focused upon personal improvement in skill, as opposed to the tangible outcomes of the race, such as race positions and/or completion of the race. The respondents all reflect a strong leaning towards this type of orientation, as many of them reported personal lessons being learnt from the race, regardless of their personal performance. This finding supports the claim that the mastery skill orientation can be associated with secondary control, such that these

two concepts both focus on the 'internal,' rather than external, physical/tangible outcomes. In addition, this finding also strengthens Scherl's (1989) argument that humans immersed in natural environments have a strong tendency to exert secondary control in order to maintain a sense of positive self-identity.

In this sense, the orientation and control practices of the respondents helped them maintain a positive self-identity throughout the race, which, in turn, has contributed to their positive experience of the race. Ultimately, their positive experience of the race site can be attributed by the respondents' experience of the race itself. Noting that the environment provides a context for an event to take place (Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1994), it can therefore be argued that a positive experience at an event results in a positive experience of the locations where the event occurred. This argument was supported by the findings of this study, when respondents expressed their greater appreciation for Grande Cache and its surroundings, terming them as 'special places.'

7.2.3 Place attachment.

The findings of Chapter VI indicated that the respondents regarded Grande Cache and its surrounding areas as 'special places,' and were likely to return to it, if time and opportunity permitted. For many of them, Grande Cache had become a 'special' place, as a result of having experienced a significant achievement in their life, having encountered novel experiences during the race, or having interacted with the locals of Grande Cache. Although all of them had come to Grande Cache for the purpose of participating in the race, many of them indicated different reasons for wanting to go back to it in the future.

Consistent with previous studies done on place attachment (Moore & Grafe, 1994; Vaske & Korbin, 2002; Walker, 2002), there are strong reasons to believe that place dependency is often the initial drawing factor for an individual to visit a recreational site. However, as an individual makes repeated visits to the same area, the meanings attached to the place changes. These changes have been clearly shown in this study.

Having gone to Grande Cache as a way of satisfying their desires for personal challenge, fun, new experiences, and to better their race timings, many of the respondents travelled to Grande Cache with the sole purpose of competing in the Death Run. After the race, the respondents expressed a desire to return for more than one reason. For some, the reason to return was to visit with the new friends from Grande Cache. For others, the desire to return was found to be a combination of both aesthetic (e.g., natural environment) and social (e.g., family vacation) reasons.

The change in the respondents' reasons to visit Grande Cache reflects the dynamic nature of meanings associated with a place, and their potential to change with time and the increased frequency of visits. Even place dependencies may change, as the meanings that respondents attach to the place itself changes. It is possible that this dependence on place may eventually, after repeated visits and increased exposure to it, develop into some sort of an identity with the place, thus turning into place identity. This, in turn, could develop into a stronger lever of place attachment, such that the respondents would actually be committed to the well being of Grande Cache and its environments. Conversely, this sense of attachment could also be lost with the progression of time and not lead to place identity.

Another finding that can be considered 'untypical' was the manifestation of place attachment by the respondents. While many of the respondents' manifestations of place attachment reflect what is often known as 'geopiety' (Tuan, 1977), a few respondents had very different ideas of how care for a place can be carried out. Tuan has proposed that 'geopiety' is essentially a natural extension of care that is often extended to places of attachment by individuals. These 'acts' of care and concern can be manifested through actions such as volunteering (e.g., for local community groups), advocating (e.g., for conservation of local green spaces) and/ or supporting local causes through monetary means. They are usually carried out as a way to 'preserve' the status quo of the place. In this study, many respondents indicated their willingness to support environmental groups in preserving the pristine environments around the town of Grande Cache from natural resource exploitation or human development. Three respondents did, however, indicate that the way they could help care for the town, was by supporting economic development that served the interests of local residents. For those respondents, place attachment went beyond preserving the physical status quo of a place. It was also about supporting those who resided in the places close to their hearts.

Finally, a point of significance that arose from this study was the apparent importance of social ties as an attribute that fosters the development of an individual's attachment to place. While a few respondents felt that running through a place gave them a more intimate understanding of the area, others mentioned the importance of social ties. Interaction with the local residents had contributed to their experience of a place.

It is evident that many respondents felt a strong desire to return to Grande Cache because of these social bonds. Whether it was going back to visit old friends, re-live the

experience of the crowds, or to indulge in the hospitality of the residents, the social aspects of a place were seen to be a strong reason for some respondents to return, and for individuals to form an attachment to these places. Though substitute to certain natural features (e.g., forests trails, mountainous regions etc.) are available in other locations, the unique community of Grande Cache would be difficult to replicate elsewhere. It can therefore be argued that very often, it is the people, or the social aspects of a place that helps give a place its uniqueness.

This social dimension may be crucial for adventure racers to develop a sense of attachment to their racing environments. While the respondents were all competitive individuals, they did form important social bonds before, during and after the event. Those bonds were fostered through friendships with fellow competitors, good race organizers, enthusiastic volunteers/race marshals, loud spectators and hospitality from the locals. Through these social bonds, the race environment becomes more personalized. In particular, friendships with local residents became the competitors 'tie-in' to a place like Grande Cache. Competitors may, in fact, continue to experience their racing environments vicariously through their new friends made in Grande Cache, thus bringing the 'place' much closer to the competitor than he or she was before the race. While this idea has not been explored fully, the findings show that some respondents viewed Grande Cache more positively because of their interaction with the local residents.

The insights discussed above reflect the exploratory nature of this study. While it has been shown that respondents did develop a sense of attachment to their racing environments, much of this attachment was derived from a dependency on the place to cater to their needs, rather than the respondents' desire to be part of a place or the place

being a part of them (i.e., place identity). Furthermore, with many of the respondents having a prior affinity for natural environments, participating in the Death Race provided certain individuals with opportunities to experience new natural areas, and to potentially form a bond with them. Despite the fact that not all respondents expressed a strong emotional attachment to the area, many of them did indicate their willingness to speak out against natural resource exploitation that they felt was not in the best interest of the environment.

7.3 Implications of Findings.

Race organizers of future single-disciplined MLARs, as well as land-resource managers of public lands or natural reserves, where these races are held, should consider the study findings and insights mentioned above.

In the section on identity and place, it was seen that the respondents exhibited the typical motivations of adventure-sports tourists, wanting not only to challenge themselves but also to experience a new place and, sometimes, to see a new natural area. Race organizers planning their races in remote natural areas with small communities within them could help to develop a tourism base for these communities conditional upon communities wanting to adopt this strategy. Participants with similar attitudes to those of the respondents in this study could be encouraged to stay longer after that race, to engage in other activities that the area supported (e.g., fishing, hiking, mountain biking). This not only gives remote communities an opportunity to capitalize on these competitors as tourists, but also allows the competitors to have an opportunity to interact with the local residents, thereby contributing to the possible development of place attachment.

The finding that respondents tended to best remember moments or challenges that were least expected and successfully negotiated could benefit race-organizers, when conducting training camps. While participants should be given some pre race exposure to the race route, some areas should be avoided so that they are novel on the race day. For example, competitors were briefed on the Gauntlet, but did not tour this section of the course during the 2002 Death Run Training Camp. As a result, this section of the race was probably one of its most well remembered.

In terms of place attachment, the social aspects of the race accounted for much of the respondents desire to return to its location. Thus, while the race organizers are unlikely to be able to rely on competitors of the race in contributing to the social aspect of the race, one way of creating a sociable atmosphere in adventure races may be by allowing support crews for the participants. Besides trying to ensure that volunteers, race marshals, and race officials attempt to create a comfortable atmosphere for the participants, support crews help provide a point of personal contact for many of the participants. In addition, race organizers could also designate certain areas in the race where spectators and supporters could encourage the competitors. This point brings out the importance of why adventure races, especially those held within the vicinity of small communities, have to be welcomed by the local people of these communities. In this study, the hospitality extended by the residents of Grande Cache made a difference for a number of the respondents and, in some cases, even became a reason for some of them to return. This finding supports the idea that people put a human face to a place, giving it a unique character and life.

Like race-organizers, land resource managers can also benefit from the study insights. By understanding that participants tend to develop affinity to the natural areas, in which they compete, resource managers may feel less inclined to reject events such as adventure races. However, these managers should still retain the strict environmental rules that race organizers currently enforce not only as a precaution to ensure that the area is kept clean, but also as a way to retain the focus of adventure races on the integrity of the natural environment. Further, by understanding that participating in such a race may result in the participants forming an attachment to their racing environment, resource managers should also consider racers as future stakeholders in the area. Including different user groups of a natural area would help to ensure that public lands cater to a wide variety of users (Sharpe & Ewert, 2001).

7.4 Future Research

The findings presented in this study suggest future research topics and approaches for the subject of place. Quantitative research methods could be used to sample a larger population of racers in single-discipline mid-length adventure races. This approach would allow conclusions to be generalized to a wider population of adventure racers engaged in single-discipline mid-length adventure races.

Another aspect of this study that could be examined further is specialization or the extent of a respondent's experience as a MLAR competitor. In their study measuring place attachment amongst white water kayakers, Bricker and Kerstetter (2000) found that the 'specialization' of white water kayakers did affect their sense of place attachment to the areas where they paddled. Although not statistically significant, it was shown that

those who had been involved in the sport longer and had achieved a higher skill level were likely to be more fastidious when selecting locations to kayak. Having kayaked in more places than other kayakers, these specialists were assumed to have had a broader range of recreation areas to choose from. Extending this area of research to mid-length adventure racers who have been competing in the sport for a long time may produce some interesting results. For example, did significant and novel experiences evoke a sense of connection (via place identity and/or place dependency) for racing veterans to their race locations? As well, the places where the participants have raced could be compared in order to learn why racers did or did not form an attachment to place. Moreover, even if they had formed an attachment to a place, the extent to which that sense of attachment has brought the individual back to that particular place would be of interest.

More consideration should be given to the pace of visitors to natural areas. One option would be to do a comparative study of people who actually used the same trail—one group who has done a two or three-day hike, and the other group who have engaged in a race, in the same place and covering the same distance in much less time. Such a study would examine whether the faster pace of movement across the racing environment translated into weaker place attachment or whether there was in fact little relationship between pace of travel and place attachment. The insights gained from such studies will not only enrich the current literature but they would act as a base for future research in the area of human environment-psychology.

Another research possibility could be a similar study of participants in multiple-disciplined adventure racers. It is currently not known whether participants in these races

enjoy and experience a place as well as those who compete in single-discipline mid-length adventure races. The interaction with the various natural elements in the CARs are likely to be more intense than the interactions in other types of races, so could a more intimate experience of a natural space and thus more opportunities for place attachment to develop.

7.5. Reflection on Methodology

Although the use of a pre-race questionnaire to obtain the respondents' basic demographical information, attitudes and the feelings before the race was helpful, a more in-depth questionnaire, sampling a larger number of participants, would have increased insights into the general demographic population taking part in the Death Run. After the pre-race data gathering stage had ended, it was observed that some of the questions could have been better worded to ensure more detailed and clear responses. For this reason, the information that could have potentially been obtained was probably not done so in the first part of this study. This factor also created problems during the beginning of the interview process.

In the interview process, the limited pre-tests that were conducted presented significant challenges. Being the first 'formal' interview I had ever conducted, I encountered some difficulty in formulating follow-up questions to probe further for details. My anxiety over not being able to obtain all the needed details plagued me with nervousness during my first interviews. However, the subsequent interviews were better as my confidence increased with each interview.

Although this study did not utilize participant-observation as a method of data collection, my experience as a volunteer at the 2002 Death Run proved to be a double-edged sword during the data-analysis process. Experiencing the 2002 Death Run as a volunteer helped increase my understanding of the contexts that the respondents had experienced when they related their race-day experiences. My insight into the race day conditions also gave me an advantage during the interpretation process, as I did not have to try to imagine what the respondents were discussing. However, this same advantage proved to be a disadvantage because it introduced my own bias into the data collection and analysis. For example, the respondents may not have bothered to elaborate on their answers because they assumed that I would understand what they had meant. I may, therefore, have missed key insights.

In hindsight, if I were to conduct this study again, I would carry out at least three trials of the pre-test questionnaire and interview before I embarked on the study. Despite the disadvantages presented, I would still go to the race location during the event itself to experience the atmosphere. Making myself less visible (i.e., by being a volunteer behind the scenes) during the race may have helped in minimizing any potential bias. Nevertheless, the importance of being able to relate to the respondents still outweighs disadvantage of having preconceptions about their answers. In any case, making a conscious effort to keep an open mind during the interpretation process could reduce this disadvantage as did the systematic process used for analysis.

Finally, I tried to use phenomenology as a guiding principle throughout this study to ensure that the words came from the respondents themselves. In an attempt to validate the findings, I made a conscious effort to obtain the respondent's feedback by sending my

transcripts back to the respondents and asking them to make any desired changes. Half of the respondents commented on these transcripts, very often elaborating on specific points. Although I had the final say in this work, I tried very hard to ensure that the information provided by the respondents was accurately reported in this study.

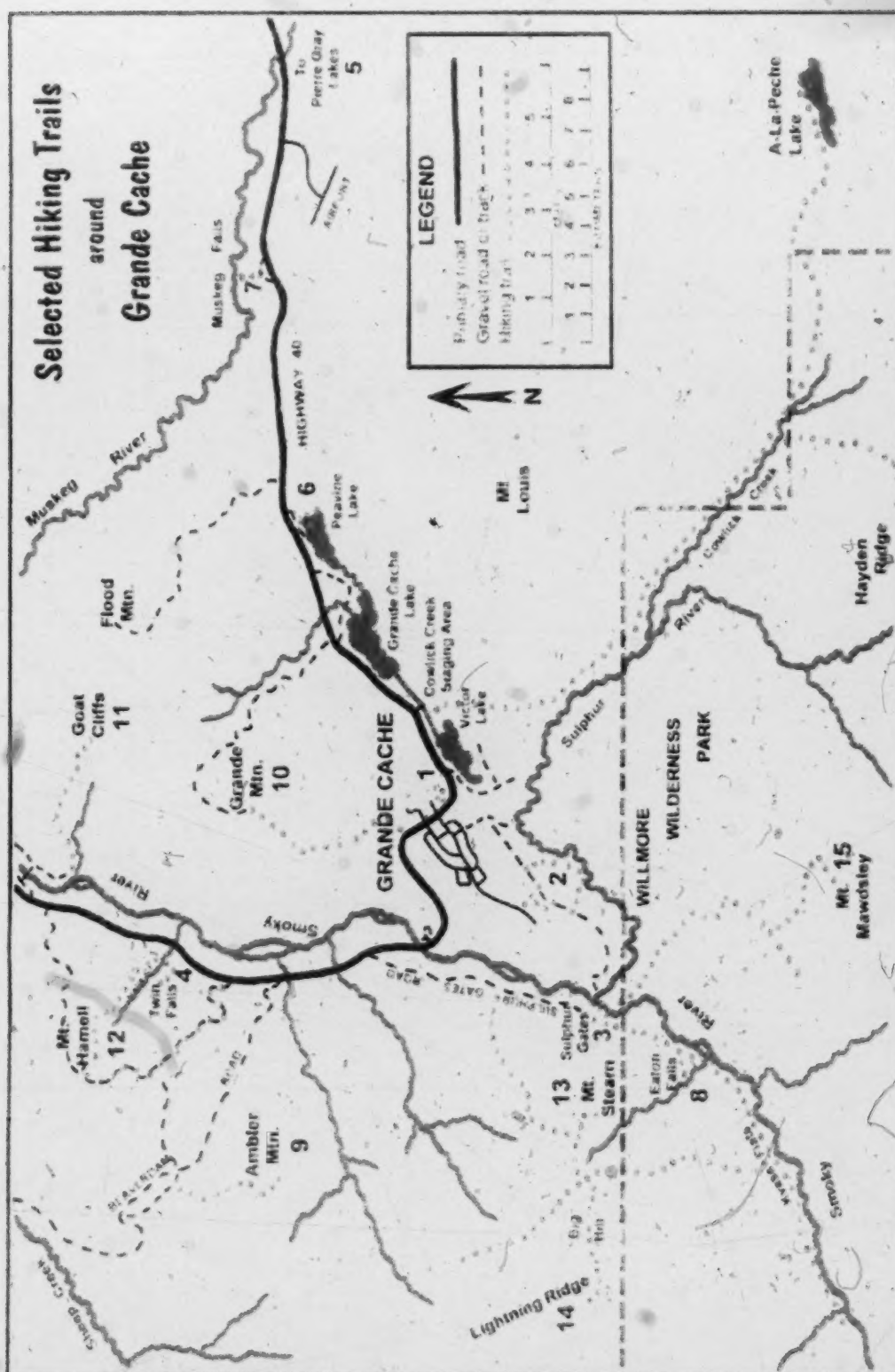
7.6 Final Notes on the Study

This study began by asking if participation in a mid-length adventure races fostered an attachment to the racing environments. Seeking these answers from 11 participants in the Canadian Death Run 2002, I learned that an attachment to place had indeed formed for all of them. However, each respondent manifested this attachment in different ways.

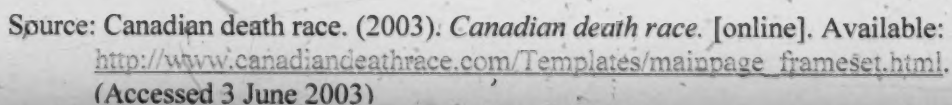
For some, the experience at the 2002 Death Run was a personal high for them, making Grande Cache, the Death Trail and its surrounding areas a place that would forever be special in their hearts. For others, the experience at the 2002 Death Run served as a major achievement for them, inspiring them to pursue further challenges including MLARs or CARs in similar settings.

However, as the respondents engage in more races of a similar nature, these attachments to places like Grande Cache are likely to change, as their experience and exposure to similar settings increases. The use of secondary control strategies helped the respondents to maintaining their sense of positive self-identity, which subsequently contributed to their attachment of place. Such insights confirm the findings of previous studies and as well as to suggest new avenues of research in the dynamic topic of place attachment.

For me, undertaking this study has also been a revelation. It has helped me think more about my relation to recreational spaces. Whether these experiences were on the beaches of Singapore or the trails of Edmonton, I have grown more aware of my own preferences for spaces. My own 'Death Run' began at the start of this study and will end with the completion of this thesis. Like the real Death Race, my race has been a long one, with 'battles' to fight, pains to endure, joys to share, and moments to celebrate. Moreover, at the end of the day, it too, was a major learning process. It has helped me learn about the way racers relate to their racing environments and how I have related to my own recreational spaces. Overall, this study has deepened my thinking, broadened my horizons, and enhanced my understandings of the basic and underlying complexities of place identity, place dependence, and place attachment—all of which are continuously changing and evolving.



Map taken from Deamer, T. (1998). Selected hiking trails around Grande Cache. (4th Ed.). [Brochure]



Pre-Death Run Questionnaire Cover Sheet**Name:** _____**Sex:** _____**Age:** _____**Occupation:** _____**Mailing Address:** _____**City:** _____ **Province:** _____**Contact Tel:** _____ (H) _____ (O)

_____ (Cell)

E-Mail: _____**The best way to contact you would be: Tel (h)/(o)/(cell) / E-Mail (Please circle)**

Thank you for your time and effort in filling out the questionnaire. I appreciate your input into this study.

**Pre-Death Run Questionnaire: Please answer in the spaces provided.
Additional space is provided at the end of the questionnaire**

1) How long have you been trail running?

2) Why do you participate in the sport?

3) What has been/is your favourite running trail? Why?

4) Approximately how many times have you been back to this trail area? Why?

5) Have you been to any part of the Death Trail before? (If yes, please describe this area and proceed to the next question. If no, please proceed to Question 8)

6) What do you think of the environments surrounding these particular sections of the Death Trail?

7) Have you ever wanted to spend more time in these area(s)? Why?

8) Based on your expectations of this year's Death Trail course, how would you describe it to a friend?

9) Will the completion of the Death Run be a major achievement for you? Why?

10) What are your main reasons for participating in this year's Death Run?

11) Do you think the Death Run would be as successful if it was not held in Grande
Cache? Why?

(Additional comments)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION!
GOOD LUCK WITH THE RACE, DEATH RUNNER!!!! RUN ON!!!

Participant Information Letter

Title of Project: Development of Place Attachment Among Participants of the Canadian Death Run 2002

Investigator(s): Miss Hui-Shin Ngiam
MA Graduate Student

Supervised by: Dr. Tom. D. Hinch
(Associate Professor)

Affiliation: Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta.

Telephone:

Study Purpose: The purpose of this study is to learn about the possible development of place attachment among participants of the Canadian Death Run 2002 and the factors that may affect this attachment. This study is being carried out as a thesis requirement for the Masters of Arts (Recreation) program.

Background: Place attachment can be defined as the meaning that humans assign to particular physical spaces. This assignment of meaning may sometimes result in people's repeated visitation to a particular place, or in an increased willingness to be involved in the issues related to the areas. With the increase in the number of adventure races in North America, the way that race participants relate to the natural areas in which they compete is becoming more important. This study therefore, is designed to explore place attachment among participants of adventure races who compete in pristine and isolated environments.

Procedures: Your participation in this study will include the completion of a questionnaire describing your trail running experiences as well as your personal aspirations for taking part in the Death Run before the event itself. A follow up interview will be conducted within a three week time frame after the race. Because an interview will only be carried out with 10 respondents, you may or may not be requested to participate in the second phase of the study.

Study Benefits: The study may enable you to gain a better understanding of the factors that have made particular spaces special to you.

Study Risks: Given the nature of the study, the risks you may encounter are limited but include the recollection and subsequent disclosure of bad memories/incidents that you may have of a place. This may cause you to feel uncomfortable or upset. If requested, referral to a counsellor will be provided.

Confidentiality: To ensure your anonymity, personal information will be coded and stored in a room under lock and key—to which only the investigator will have access. This information will be kept after the completion of the thesis for five years, and then destroyed.

Withdrawing: You may choose to withdraw from the study at anytime without explanation. Your information will be removed from the study upon your request. Withdrawal can be requested by phone, fax, e-mail, post or face-to-face.

Additional Contacts: If you wish to speak with someone not involved in this study, please call Dr. Wendy Rodgers, Chair, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation Ethics Committee, University of Alberta at [redacted] or by e-mail at [redacted]

Primary Investigator: Miss Hui-Shin Ngiam (MA Graduate Student)
Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation
University of Alberta,

Supervised by: Dr Tom. D. Hinch
Associate Professor
Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
University of Alberta
E424 Van Vliet Centre
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6G 2H9

Title of Project: Development of Place Attachment Among Participants of the Canadian Death Run 2002

Principal Investigator: Hui-Shin Ngiam

Affiliation: Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta.
Supervised by Dr T.D. Hinch, (Assoc. Prof)

Telephone:

To be completed by the research participant:

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Have you read and received a copy of the attached Information Letter	Yes	No
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	Yes	No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate, or to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence, and that your information will be withdrawn at your request?	Yes	No
Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you? Do you understand who will have access to your information?	Yes	No

I agree to take part in this study:

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Witness

Printed Name

Printed Name

Research Participant's Mailing Address & E-mail

Development of Place Attachment Among Participants of the Canadian Death Run 2002: In-Depth Interview Guide

Introduction: Nature of the project and its purpose.

Reminder: Participant's right to withdraw at any given time and assurance of confidentiality.

Abbreviations: Grand Tour Question (GTQ), Floating Prompts (FP), Planned Prompts (PP)

Lead in Question:

- 1) Please describe your trail running experiences to me. Why do you do it?

GTQ:

- 2) Describe your experience of running the CANADIAN DEATH RUN 2002?

PP:

- Was there any thing special about this Run compared to other runs?
- Were you feeling relaxed or tensed throughout?
- Did you feel 'safe' in the trail environment?
- What were you thinking of during the run?
- What were the surroundings like?
- Were you with a group of people or running alone?

- 3) Please describe the key moments for you during the Run and explain why you consider them to be significant?

- Can you recall what checkpoint that area was near?
- Did any of the activities (Repelling/Traversing/Bog Crossing) stand out?
- What was on your mind when you repelled down Hells' Gates Canyon?
- What was on your mind when you traversed to get the prayer flag?
- What was on your mind when you finally made it up Mt Hammel?

- 4) Were there any other times when you felt the same way as you described in the last question? Where did this occur? Please describe them.

- Were these moments also during adventure/trail running races?
- Have you gone back to the place since or had the urge to go back?

5) Did you achieve what you had set out to accomplish in the race? Why or why not?

- Was that achievement a minor or major one in your life?
- How did you go about achieving what you had planned to do?
- Do you think it was 'fate'—meant to be, or solely your own effort with a bit of luck etc?
- Did you feel in control of the situation?
- Did you find yourself adjusting your objectives during the race?

6) Is the Death Trail a special place for you? Do you think you have formed a special bond with the area in which you raced?

- Have you a respect for the area?
- Would you want to protect it from damage (e.g., mining activity)? How would you go about doing that?
- How do you think your experiences have contributed to or taken away from this feeling of a special bond with the death trail?
- How do you think that having control of the situation during the run has changed the way you view the death trail?
- Do you think that you view the death trail any differently because of the need for you to adjust your objectives during the race?

7) What was your first impression of Grande Cache and has this changed (for good or bad) because of the race?

- Was it a good/bad or neutral feeling?
- Why do you think it has changed?
- Has that impression changed over the years? How has it changed?

Concluding Remarks:

- Are there other comments that you would like to make about your running experiences in the Death Run 2002?
- Offer the respondent an opportunity to view the completed study.
- Thank them for their time
- Provide them with my e-mail address in order that I may be accessible to them regarding any further questions that may follow after the interview.

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